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Assessment of nutritional status of adolescent school girls in Panala sub zonal educational division by means of anthropometric assessments

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Adolescence is a unique crucial period in the life cycle. Adolescents are defined as persons aged 10-19 years. Adolescence can be the second opportunity for catch-up growth if environmental conditions, especially nutrient intake are favorable. Growth is faster than at any other time in life except the first year. Adolescents gain up to 50% weight of their adult weight, more than 20% of their adult height and 50% of their skeletal mass. Adolescent girls commonly experience psychological and emotional problems that exert a significant influence on their nutritional status when compared with boys. In Sri Lanka, few studies have been carried out to assess the nutrition status of adolescent school girls. The objective of this study was to assess the nutritional status of adolescent school girls in Pannala sub zonal educational division by using anthropometric measurements.

Three schools in Pannala sub zonal educational division were randomly selected and a cross-sectional study was carried out. A total of 110 subjects, aged 13 – 15 years were randomly enrolled to this study. A pre-tested, self administered questionnaire was distributed among the subjects and their weight, height, waist and hip circumference, were measured by using standard techniques. Epi Info version 3.4 was used to generate Z scores and percentiles for weight for age, height for age and BMI for age. Subjects were categorized as underweight, stunted, overweight and obese using WHO cut-offs. Overall mean weight, height, and BMI of the study group were recorded as 43.46 (8.32) kg, 151.37 (10.36) cm and 18.69 (3.20) kg m⁻² respectively. In the study population 20.7%, 19.8% 19.1%, 9.1%, 0.9% and 52.7% were of underweight, stunted, wasted, overweight, obese and normal nutritional status, respectively.