MOTHERS’ PARTICIPATION IN AN EDUCATION-AGRICULTURE INTERVENTION TO IMPROVE THEIR CHILDREN’S NUTRITION

* Child undernutrition continues to be a public health problem in Ghana. In 2014 in the Eastern region, 17% of children under 5 y were stunted (short for their age) and 3% were wasted (thin for their height)

* Women’s income has been shown to be positively associated with household energy consumption.

* Increasing women’s income-generating activities and nutrition knowledge can help them improve their children’s nutritional status.

References:

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

In 2013, we identified 1096 households in 154 communities in UMKD with an infant <12 mo of age. Communities were then randomly selected across UMKD to be a part of the Nutrition Links intervention; these households are representative of the district. Mothers with infants <12 mo from these communities were involved in the education-agriculture intervention, which included (1) weekly health, nutrition and agriculture education sessions; (2) home garden and poultry husbandry materials; and (3) training in the management and commercialization of eggs. Weight and height measurements, blood tests, and dietary information was collected from the 264 infants whose mothers were involved in the intervention and the data were compared to 205 infants from communities that did not receive the intervention.
NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Fewer mothers in the intervention group lived in rural areas compared to non-intervention mothers (p<0.0001). More intervention mothers worked as traders, while more non-intervention participants were farmers (p<0.05).

Egg consumption did not differ between intervention and non-intervention children at the beginning of the project. After 6 months more children in the intervention group consumed eggs compared to those in the non-intervention group (p<0.0001).

No differences in nutritional status existed between intervention and non-intervention children at the beginning of the project. After 6 months there tended to be fewer children who were wasted among intervention households compared with non-intervention households (p=0.063). Stunting and anemia rates remained similar.

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