

Malnutrition among Indigenous Batwa in Southwestern Uganda

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Both the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals stress a need for global improvement in regards securing adequate nutrition and reducing malnutrition. However, addressing malnutrition as a global health concern requires a better understanding of how malnutrition affects already vulnerable populations, especially Indigenous peoples. Using both descriptive statistical reporting and multilevel modeling, this study seeks to document and explore the burden of malnutrition for the Indigenous Batwa and non-Indigenous Bakiga of Southwestern Uganda from data collected in 2014. Malnutrition is high in among both Batwa children and adults, with all Batwa population age-sex groupings meeting WHO ‘critical’ rates ($\geq 15\%$). In contrast, none of the Bakiga age-sex groupings meet ‘critical’ malnutrition rates. Multilevel modeling, using individual, household, community, and community ethnicity characteristics as levels, demonstrated a strong explanatory power for community ethnicity in malnutrition clustering in this study. This research offers not only useful information about the prevalence and patterning of malnutrition among the Batwa and Bakiga of Southwestern Uganda, but also places this unequal disease burden in a larger discussion around health inequalities that emerge along ethnic lines and the intervenable global health concern that is malnutrition.

Mixed multilevel model results

Dependent variable: malnutrition status

