

MALNUTRITION AWARENESS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FROM MUMBAI, INDIA, AND HANNOVER, GERMANY

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Background: Malnutrition is the condition in which the body does not get the right amount of proteins, vitamins, or other nutrients.¹ The global prevalence of malnutrition was reported as 13% in 2015.² The subregion of South Asia is especially known as a critical area for severe wasted children aged <5 years.³ In India, 38.4% of children aged <3 years are stunted, and 46% are underweight.⁴ Malnutrition can lead to mortality as well as disabilities and long-term consequences such as cognitive disabilities, less economic productivity, or diseases.⁵

Objectives: The present study explored the awareness of malnutrition among university students from Mumbai, India, and Hannover, Germany.

Methods: This prospective cross-sectional study was conducted at Faculty III, The University of Applied Science and Arts, Hannover, Germany, and the Institute of Chemical Technology, Mumbai, India. An online validated questionnaire was designed and sent to Mumbai and Hannover students. Fifty students from Mumbai and 52 students from Hannover completed the online questionnaire. Collected data were analyzed by using Microsoft Excel and are represented as frequencies and percentages.

Results: The average (SD) age was 20.9 (1.7) years for Mumbai students and 24.5 (2.2) years for Hannover students. Six (12%) and 48 (92.3%) students from Mumbai and Hannover, respectively, were aware of symptoms of malnutrition. Twenty-nine (58%) and 26 (50%) of students from Mumbai and Hannover, respectively, were not sure about the treatment of malnourished children. Fifteen (30%) and 44 (84.6%) students from Mumbai and Hannover were aware of the consequences of malnutrition.

Discussion: The Hannover cohort showed a high awareness, whereas the Mumbai cohort had a low awareness about malnutrition. Introducing university courses to optimize the nutrition awareness level of Mumbai students can be helpful for the Indian community. It can help to tackle malnutrition and associated problems of mortality, as well as disabilities and long-term consequences such as cognitive disabilities, less economic productivity, or diseases.

Key words: malnutrition, children, awareness, Mumbai, Hannover.

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