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Improving nutritional status of children under 6 through nutrition counseling in rural area

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Nutrition counseling is one of the nutritional activities for improving child nutrition. It is the best way for decreasing malnutrition in children. Goal: To improve nutritional status of children under 6 through nutrition counseling in rural area with high prevalence of malnutrition. Methods: An international study with a total of 660 children with their mothers and with duration of seven months started in Lali district (in Khozestan province of Iran). Data gathered with using a demographic questionnaire and anthropometric measurements in children. Afterwards, malnourished children determined and referred to nutrition counseling centers. After training mothers, planning a diet and monitoring nutritional status were determined. Results: The prevalence of stunting, wasting and underweight in studied children at the beginning of the study were 9.6%, 6.2% and 4.8% respectively, which reached 8.7%, 3.3% and 2.4% by the end of the project (P<0.05). The intervention was most efficient in children suffering growth retardation, with a cure rate of 91%; only 48.6% of malnourished children referred to the center health were cured. Conclusion: Results obtained from this study showed that over 90% of children suffering growth retardation were cured. This means establishing nutrition counseling centers to encourage proper nutrition behaviors, evaluate current issues and find possible solutions, persuade mothers to improve child nutrition status making use of practical and specific methods appropriate with the tradition of the region has had an important role in improving the nutrition status of the children in the region.