

Efficacy of Nutrition Counselling on the Nutritional and Haematological Profile of Elderly Males of Urban and Rural Areas

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ABSTRACT A sample of 60 elderly males aged 60-75 yrs. i.e. 30 each from urban (Group I) and rural (Group II) areas belonging to low socio-economic status were selected from Ludhiana district. The average per capita monthly income was Rs. 898/- and Rs. 858/- in group I and II respectively. Nutrition counselling was carried out for three months through lectures, demonstrations, visual aids etc. by nine individual and three group contacts to the subjects alongwith their wives. Daily food intake of the subjects was recorded by using "24 hr. recall method" for three consecutive days before (T_1) and after nutrition counselling (T_2). The food intake in both the groups was inadequate in cereals, pulses, roots and tubers, other vegetables, fruits, milk and milk products. However, intake of GLV's, fats and oils, sugar and jaggery was higher than ICMR recommendations at T_1 and T_2 in both the groups. Average daily energy intake in group I and II was 2297 and 2276 and 2285 and 2269 Kcal at T_1 and T_2 respectively. All the subjects consumed diets inadequate in protein, vitamin A, niacin, riboflavin, vit. B₁₂, iron and zinc, but adequate in energy, thiamine, calcium and phosphorus. The mean haemoglobin levels in group I and II at T_1 and T_2 were 12.94 and 14.49 and 13.15 and 14.78 g/dl. The study revealed that there was significant improvement in the nutrient intake and haematological profile of the subjects at T_2 but it did not meet the recommendations. The poor status could be due to low income, illiteracy, ignorance, low availability of foods, loneliness, depression etc. There should be multi prolonged nutrition and health education programme, keeping in view the cost benefit analysis and severe financial constraints.