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Household Food and Nutrition Security: A Case Study of Children on Nutrition Supplementation Program

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ABSTRACT A household food and nutrition security measurement of children on the nutrition supplementation programme is the focus of this study. A sample of 136 children aged 6-72 months and their caregivers were drawn from three Pietermaritzburg healthcare facilities. Face-to-face interviews were conducted, using a questionnaire with: a 24-hour recall; Children Food Insecurity Access Scale; Household Food Insecurity Access Scale; Monthly Adequate Household Food Provision; and Household Dietary Diversity Scale. Focus group discussions probed household perceptions and challenges concerning food access and child malnutrition, while anthropometric measurements were taken to assess the children's nutritional status. Households were food secure by 52 percent and the children by 71 percent. Only 63 percent of the children were healthy; while 29 percent and 8 percent were wasting and obese, respectively. Children were indirectly deprived of the right to food for proper development. The household food basket was limited by food access, affecting child diet quality and food intake, and thus threatening their nutrition status. Food and nutrition security is complex because food security does not directly translate to children nutrition security. Rigorous research is required to investigate the drivers, risks and design practical interventions necessary to successfully alleviate food and nutritional insecurity.