

Selected factors related to taking breakfast among school children aged 10 to 15 years residing in the medical officer of health area of Kelaniya

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The cluster sampling method was used and the data was collected throughout 14 Public Health Midwife (PHM) areas out of the 28 such areas in Kelaniya, where an interviewer administered questionnaire was used. Pre-testing of the questionnaires and pilot testing were performed and every effort was done to maintain the quality of data at every stage. Key findings were that the frequency of taking breakfast was low where only 34.0 percent of children had breakfast four or five days per five -day school week, 41.5 percent of them ate on two or three days and 24.5 percent of the ate only on one day or not at all. The practices with regard to breakfast were relatively low compared to knowledge and attitudes. Through there was a significant relationship between the mothers' level of education, knowledge and attitudes regarding their children's breakfast, there was no relationship between them and the practices actually adopted towards breakfast. It was therefore recommended to provide at least a 15 minute time period in school between 8.00 am and 9.00 a.m to have breakfast. This has to be implemented through advocacy, inter-sect oral coordination between health and education sectors and as well as education of school teachers, children and mothers regarding breakfast and behavioural change. It was also recommended to increase the availability of healthy food at school canteens.