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STUDY ON RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LIFESTYLE OF EMPLOYED MOTHERS AND NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF THEIR CHILDREN AT MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH AREA, BATTICALOA

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Background: Early childhood nutritional status (within the first 2years) is the most important factor for developing childhood morbidity and mortality. Initial morbidity makes most of the problem in late life. Good nutritional status is one of the important factors for the development of cognitive function and IQ development. Globally around 45% of death among children under 5 years of age are linked to undernutrition. It is one of the leading causes of the mortality of children under 5 years of age. Mothers play a significant role in the nutritional status of the baby. Activities including breastfeeding, food preparation, seeking health care facilities carried out by mothers were found to be important factors for child health and nutritional status. However, incase increase in female labour force participation reduced the time they would have otherwise spent on caring for their child. This study aimed to evaluate how the lifestyle of the working mothers affects the nutritional status of their under five years of age children at Batticaloa MOH area.

Methods & Materials: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 263 working mothers who have under five years of age children, who lived in the Batticaloa MOH area from September 2021 to February 2022. It was included working mothers who are doing self, government and privet sector employment. Complete enumeration was used to recruit the participants. A validated self-administrated questionnaire was used as data collection instrument. SPSS 26.0 was used to analyze the data, and p- value < 0.05 was considered significant for all analyses. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee, Faculty of Health-Care Science, Eastern University, Sri Lanka

Results: According to our study, about 19.8% were underweight, 1.5% were overweight, 25.5% were stunted, 6.8% were wasting and 6.8% were obese in Batticaloa MOH area

under five-year children whose mothers were employed. There is positive relationship between acute nutritional status (weight for age) and the duration of time mother spent with child and also with the acute on chronic nutritional status (weight for height) and the duration of time mother spent with child. Children become abnormal nutrient levels predicting decreased like hood associated with mothers spending more time with children. The log odd of abnormal acute and acute on chronic nutritional status of the child whose mothers spent more than 8 hours with their child were decreased by 0.182 and 0.622 respectively compared to mothers who spent less than 5 hours with them

Discussion & Conclusion: There is a positive relationship between the lifestyle of employed mothers and the nutritional status of their under five years of age children. Child nutritional status become healthier when mothers spend more time with their child.

Keywords: *Nutritional status, Under-five years of age, employed mothers' life style*