

**PREVALENCE OF MALNUTRITION AND ITS
ASSOCIATED FACTORS AMONG ELDERLY IN
THANDWE TOWNSHIP,
RAKHINE STATE**

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ABSTRACT

Nutrition is the key to health, and malnutrition is a frequent and severe problem in the elderly. There are many potential risk factors for malnutrition. Routine screening for malnutrition in elderly communities is rare. The World Health Organization stated that the world population of people aged sixty years and above is rising globally. The study aimed to determine the prevalence of malnutrition and its associated factors among the elderly in Thandwe Township, Rakhine State.

A cross-sectional study was conducted among the elderly over 60 who visited PEN clinics in Thandwe Township from August to December 2023. The elderly participants were selected from 70% of the rural population in RHC and 30% of the urban population in MCH. The rural population was equally selected from each RHC. The nutritional status of the elderly was assessed using the Mini Nutritional Assessment-Short Form (MNA-SF). A structured questionnaire was used to determine the associated factors with malnutrition, such as background characteristics, perceived health status, dietary choice, and lifestyle behaviors. In the analysis of associated factors, the Chi-squared test and multiple binary logistics regression were used in R studio (version 4.3.1).

Among 205 participants, the mean age was 69.9 (\pm 7.3) years. The prevalence of malnutrition, at risk of malnutrition, and normal nutrition were 20.5%, 45.9%, and 33.7% respectively. In the multiple binary logistics regression model, bad/ very bad perception of health (AOR= 5.08; 95% CI: 2.04, 13.2), being dependent (AOR= 2.87; 95% CI: 1.28, 6.68), and current smoking (AOR= 3.15; 95% CI: 1.20, 8.85) were strongly associated with malnutrition/ at risk of malnutrition.

A significant number of the elderly were in both categories of being malnourished and at risk of malnutrition. To manage malnutrition among the elderly, a comprehensive approach that addresses their physical, social, and emotional needs is crucial. Moreover, at the primary care level, routine screening should be conducted to identify malnutrition among the elderly.