

**FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH
NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AMONG
BASIC EDUCATION HIGH SCHOOLS IN
PYIN OO LWIN TOWNSHIP,
MANDALAY REGION**

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ABSTRACT

The health of schoolchildren is a crucial factor in determining the overall health of a nation, which forms the foundation for future health outcomes. They are the future of society. The growth deceleration in school-aged children impairs their learning, intelligence, and academic progress. Poor nutritional status of the schoolchildren can have a huge impact on them, not only in the short term but also for their long lives. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the factors associated with nutritional status among high school students in basic education high schools in Pyin Oo Lwin Township, Mandalay Region. A school-based cross-sectional study was conducted from August to December 2023 using a face-to-face interview method with structured questionnaires. Anthropometric measures were taken, and nutritional indicators were calculated using the WHO Anthro Plus software. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 16, bivariate and multivariable regression analyses were performed to find the associated factors of nutritional status. The study involved 202 students of both genders, aged between 14 and 18 years, attending Grade-10. The prevalence of stunting, thinness, overweight, and obesity was 14.9%, 12.4%, 3%, and 1%. Regarding knowledge level related to nutrition, the majority of the school adolescents had a good knowledge level (80.7%), and 77.2% had adequate dietary diversity. According to multivariable analysis, significant associated factors for malnutrition were dietary diversity and the main guardian's occupation. The students with an adequate dietary diversity score were 70% less likely to be malnourished compared to those with an inadequate diversity score [AOR= 0.30, 95%CI = (0.13, 0.67), p-value=0.003]. The children who had employed parents were three times more likely to be stunted compared to those with unemployed parents [AOR= 3.04, 95%CI = (1.10, 8.43), p-value = 0.03]. School health promotion activities should focus on nutritional status; each student should have a personalized report card for their nutritional status. Nutrition education should be provided to guardians, emphasizing a comprehensive curriculum approach across school, home, and community.