

Determinants of nutritional status of free-living elderly and middle-aged individuals living in underprivileged area of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Tran Thi Thanh Tam, author

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Abstrak

As part of CRONOS , this study, with cross-sectional design, aimed to observe nutritional and health status and some of their determinants, both nutritional and non-nutritional, of free-living elderly and middle-aged people in poor area of Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. Data on dietary intake, anthropometry, socio-economic psychological status and health assessment were collected from 100 Vietnamese elderly men and women between 60-74 years and 100 middle-aged men and women aged 35-44 years old living during 2 months January and February, 1996 in village 2, district 4, Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.

Findings of this study showed that both age groups had low energy and nutrient intakes assessed by single 24-hour recall. Median energy intakes were 8.2 MJ and 4 MJ for middle-aged and elderly respectively, which was suggested to be due to real energy intake deficiency in study population and underestimation in the recalls.

Anthropometric findings demonstrated that the elderly had lower nutritional status as compared to the middle-aged (40% of elderly versus 26% of middle-aged were classified as chronic energy deficiency). This study also confirmed that the Vietnamese elderly had higher prevalence of abdominal fatness than their younger counterparts, as evidenced by having higher abdomen-to-hip ratio.

Socio-economic and psychological data suggested that Vietnamese elderly received both socio-economic and psychological support from family substantially. Only one third of elderly people self-perceived health as good. Discrepancy between self-reported hypertension and observed hypertension suggested that medical care in the elderly population is not of concern. High prevalence of hypertension (40%) and smoking (78%) indicated that Cardiovascular disease risk factors merits consideration in the geriatric care System in Vietnam.