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Prevalence of Malnutrition in Children with Congenital Heart Disease in Afghanistan

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Background: Congenital heart defects (CHDs) are the most common congenital anomaly in infants and is known to be a leading cause of malnutrition. Malnutrition is of high prevalence among CHD infants and plays an important role in mortality, hospital infections, and increased length of stay (LOS) of such infants in the hospital.

Objectives: This study aimed to investigate the prevalence of malnutrition in children with CHD in Maiwand Teaching Hospital, Kabul - Afghanistan.

Methods: The study started from first April 2020 to 30th March 2022 and enrolled 512 under-five children with CHD. The diagnosis was based on the definitive result of Echocardiography report. They were divided into the subgroups of cyanotic with pulmonary hypertension (PH), acyanotic with PH, cyanotic without PH, and acyanotic without PH according to their diagnosis. The degree of growth failure and the severity of malnutrition were evaluated based on the WHO standards (z-score criteria) in three categories as mild (-1.1 to -2.0 SD), moderate (-2.1 to -3.0 SD), and severe (≤ 3 SD).

Results: Among the studied groups, the most prevalent , CHDs were ventricular septal defect (VSD; 43.9%) and tetralogy of Fallot (TOF; 18.3%). Severe malnutrition was significantly more prevalent in cyanotic patients with and without PH (n = 24; 64.9% and n = 89; 52.1%, respectively). Normal nutritional status was significantly more in acyanotic patients without PH (P < 0.001). Overall, malnutrition in this study was mild in 17.3%, moderate in 25.1%, and severe in 40.8% of cases.

Conclusions: The study showed that the prevalence of malnutrition in children with CHD aged under 5 years was noticeably high at this center in Iran. The administration of nutritional requirements such as low-volume and high-calorie diets should be considered for these vulnerable children.

Biography

Abdul Muhib Sharifi has completed his PhD at the age of 38 years from Asahikawa Medical University, Japan. He is the head of Pediatric cardiology department of Kabul University of Medical Sciences, Afghanistan. He has over 100 publications that have been cited over 50 times, in local and international Journals. He has been serving as an editorial board member of several reputed local and international journals.

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