

NUTRITIONAL PROBLEMS AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES IN HAITI

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Published by uPublish.info

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Haiti is a country in the Caribbean Sea. It includes the western third of the island of Hispaniola and smaller islands such as; GonÃ¢ve, Tortue (Tortuga), Grande Caye, and Vache. The capital is Port-au-Prince.

Haiti, whose population is almost entirely descended from African slaves, won independence from France in 1804, making it the second country in the Americas, after the United States, to free itself from colonial rule. Over the centuries, however, economic, political, and social difficulties have beset Haiti with chronic poverty and other serious problems.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Area: 27,750 sq km (10,714 sq miles)

Population: 10million (2010 est.)

People: African descent 95%, African and European descent 5%

Language(s): French (official), Haitian Creole (official)

Religion(s): Roman Catholic 80%, Protestant 8%, Baptist 7%, Pentecostal 4%, Adventist 1%, voodoo practices country-wide

Currency: The Gourde

Nationality: Noun and adjective - Haitian(s)

Annual population growth rate (2010 est.): 1.3%

Education: Adult Literacy: men 54%; women 50% (varies between regions, but male literacy rates tend to be higher than female).

Health: Infant Mortality rate - 76 per 1,000 live births.

Life Expectancy: - male 59 years; female 62 years.

NUTRITIONAL PROBLEMS

Haiti as a country is struck with several nutritional problems of which include;

- Child malnutrition (Stunting)
- Micronutrient deficiency (Iodine Deficiency Disorders)

JUSTIFICATION

Malnutrition is the condition that results from taking an unbalanced diet in which certain nutrients are lacking, in excess (too high an intake), or in the wrong proportions.

While malnutrition is more common in developing countries, it is also present in industrialized countries. The World Health Organization cites malnutrition as the greatest single threat to the world's public health.

Globally, Haiti is ranked 7th in terms of under-five (5) child mortality rate with a value of 165 per 1,000 live births (UNICEF, 2012). Out of this, over one-third of child deaths are due to undernutrition, mostly from increased severity of disease.

Below are the prevalence pattern of under 5 years child malnutrition with reference to WHO

standards.

Further statistics shows that, between 2006-2010: stunting, wasting and underweight stood at: 30%, 10% and 19% respectively. Global ranking of stunting prevalence: 56th highest out of 136 countries (UNICEF, 2009).

Annually, Haiti loses over US\$56 million in GDP to vitamin and mineral deficiencies. Scaling up core micronutrient interventions would cost less than US\$12 million per year (UNICEF and the Micronutrient Initiative, 2004).

Only 3% of households consume iodized salt (UNICEF, 2009). 59% of children 6-12 years are considered iodine deficient and an estimated 29,000 children annually are born mentally impaired due to iodine deficiency (MSPP, 2005).

Analysis Report of the Croatian National Institute of Public Health and UNICEF Croatia, 2000; Proportion of household consuming iodized salt (%) in Haiti, by level of iodization are as follows;

0 PPM (No iodine):	89.5%
1 - 14 ppm (Inadequate):	7.3%
> 15 ppm (Adequate):	3.1%

INTERVENTION

Key Actions to Address Malnutrition:

Improving nutrition is widely regarded as the most effective form of aid.

- Reduce early stunting:

Through improved exclusive breastfeeding and adequate complementary feeding practices.

- Address iodine deficiency:

Through iodine supplementation and salt iodization.

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