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Severity of disaster destruction hinders infant and young children's feeding practices and growth

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Child under-nutrition is a major public health concern in South Asia, Nepal being one with a high prevalence of underweight, stunting and wasting. In addition, earthquake on 25 April 2015 exacerbated the situation. Acknowledging the presence of limited study on the effect of earthquake on infant and young children (IYC) growth and feeding practices, this study was conducted two months after the mishap, in the worst affected district; Sindhupalchok and comparatively less destructed-Kathmandu. The study hypothesized that the severity of the calamity destruction is associated with inappropriate feeding practices and higher prevalence of wasting and underweight amongst IYC. Ecological study was conducted based on purposive sampling, after receiving informed consent from the caretakers of 200 children aged 0-24 months. WHO standardized questionnaire was referred to obtain qualitative and quantitative information on knowledge, attitude and behaviors on IYC growth and feeding via mobile-based questionnaire. 55% of the children in the study from Sindhupalchok were stunted, 90% were wasted and 93% underweight; whereas, 45% of the children from Kathmandu were stunted and 10% were wasted and 7% were underweight. While stratifying the variables in response to possible confounders, maternal and paternal education, poor growth was prevalent amongst the children in Sindhupalchok. Findings also suggest that responsive feeding practices were practiced more in Sindhupalchok. Hence, not only intervention and awareness on complementary responsive feeding practices but also availability of nutritious food in disaster-affected areas could play a vital in proper growth and development of the disaster affected children.

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