EXPOSURE TO CALAMITIES PREDICTS POOR NUTRITIONAL STATUS IN ELDERLY ADULTS BUT NOT IN CHILDREN AND PREGNANT WOMEN: A SECONDARY ANALYSIS OF THE 8th NNS

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BACKGROUND

The immediate and short term consequences of calamities on nutritional status have been assumed to be detrimental. Hence, government efforts focus on ensuring the availability of sufficient food in calamity-stricken areas.

OBJECTIVE

This study aimed to determine the possible effects of calamities on the nutritional status of children, 0-5 years old, the elderly and pregnant women.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Merged datasets from the 2013 National Nutrition Survey (NNS) covering 35,825 households and 172,323 individuals nationwide and data on calamity exposure to include typhoons, flood, earthquakes and landslides among others from the National Disaster and Risk Reduction Management Council (NDRRMC) were utilized. Multivariate analysis using logistic regression analysis was done to predict undernutrition.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Children from poorer households, whose mothers had elementary education and were from households with more than five members are more likely to be underweight and stunted than children from richer households, whose mothers had reached college and were from households with less than five members. Teenage pregnant women, as well as those belonging to the poorest quintile and those who did not avail of prenatal services are more likely to become nutritionally at-risk of giving birth to low birthweight babies. Exposure to calamities of these population groups did not predict poor nutritional status. However, the elderly, who were poorly educated, unemployed, with poor wealth status and who experienced several bouts of calamities prior to the survey are more likely to be underweight and iodine deficient than the younger age groups.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Exposure to calamities predicted poor nutritional status among the elderly but not among children 0 to 5 years old and pregnant women. This may be attributed to the possible preferential feeding practices of the household at the expense of adult members and exceptional caring for children and pregnant women during calamities. As such, in the provision of post-calamity assistance from government and non-government organizations, it is necessary to consider the needs of elderly members of the households.