

## **Meat and Meat Product Consumption Patterns and Prevalence of Malnutrition among Advanced Level Students in Kandy District**

R.H.W. Nadeeshani, B.R.S. Bogahawaththa, J.M.D.R. Jayawardana and D.D. Jayasena

*Department of Animal Science, Uva Wellassa University, Badulla, Sri Lanka*

This study was conducted to elucidate meat consumption patterns among the Advanced Level students in Kandy district, to examine the prevalence of malnutrition via body mass index (BMI) and to elucidate the correlation between meat consumption and prevalence of malnutrition. A total of 387 Advanced Level students were selected using a combination of stratified, systematic and simple random sampling techniques. A pretested structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data from students. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and chi-square test. Results of descriptive statistical analysis revealed that majority of students are meat consumers (92%). Students consume meat mainly because of its nutritive value (41.3%) and taste (29.5%). They consume processed meat products primarily due to the taste (30%) and convenience (25.3%). Majority of respondents consider meat type (38.8%) and freshness (15.5%) before purchasing fresh meat whereas expiry date (28.4%) and meat type (18.6%) before purchasing processed meat products. According to the results, 5.4% of students were underweight and 3.6% students were overweight. Results of chi-square analysis revealed that household income and place of living effected on the frequency of meat and processed meat consumption ( $p < 0.05$ ). Purchasing place, types of meat and processed meat they consumed were affected by the household income ( $p < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, household income, number of family members, living place, frequently consumed meat/processed meat types, frequency of consumption were effected on student BMI ( $p < 0.05$ ). This study concluded that there is a relationship between meat consumption pattern and prevalence of malnutrition. Hence, it can be recommended to conduct awareness programs or seminars on nutritional value of meat and meat products to prevent malnutrition among the school students.

*Keywords:* Body mass index, Fresh meat, Household income, Processed meat, Underweight