**Effect of nutrition education on dietary diversity and academic achievement among adolescent school girls in North Shoa Zone, Oromia, Ethiopia**

Tamiru Yazew a, \*, Chala. G. Kuyu b , Girma Beressa c , Getu Seyoum d

aDepartment of Public Health, College of Health Sciences, Salale University, Fitche, Ethiopia

bDepartment of Postharvest Management, Jimma University College of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine, Jimma, Ethiopia

cDepartment of Public Health, Madda Walabu University, Goba, Ethiopia

dSalale University Comprehensive Specialized Hospital, Fitche, Ethiopia

Corresponding author: Tamiru Yazew (tamiruyazew2012@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

**Background:** Globally, adolescent students, particularly girls, are severely affected by malnutrition, in part because of their specific biological needs, and that they have not been considered a health and nutrition priority. Hence, this study was designed to evaluate the effect of a health belief model based nutrition education on the dietary diversity and grades of adolescent school girls in the north Shewa zone, Oromia, Ethiopia.

**Methods:** A quasi-experimental study was done in the north Shewa zone, Oromia, Ethiopia. Adolescent school girls ages 10 to 19 y old were selected from the zone districts from February 1 to May 30, 2023. The main outcome variables included grades and dietary diversity, which were collected on the baseline and end line from the intervention and control groups.

**Results:** This study revealed that there were statistically significant differences in good nutritional knowledge, 88.1% versus 69.2% (x2 = 16.835, P < 0.001), good dietary diversity; 77.4% versus 45.9% (x2 = 33.247, P < 0.001) and grades above average, 90.6% versus 65.4% (x2 = 29, P < 0.001) among school adolescent girls between the intervention and control groups, respectively. Regarding positive attitude, 84.3% versus 85.5% (x2 = 0.098, P = 0.876), there was no statistically significant difference between the intervention and control groups.

**Conclusion:** In this study, the dietary diversity scores and grades of adolescent school girls in the intervention group were higher than those in the control group. Therefore, health belief model-based strategies should be recommended as effective communication channels to improve adolescent school girls’ dietary diversity and academic performance.