

Predictors of Vitamin A-rich Food Consumption Among Women From Selected Regions in Uganda

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Objectives: Vitamin A deficiency has serious public health consequences for populations in low and middle-income countries, especially for children under five years and pregnant women. The objective of this paper was to characterize vitamin A-rich foods consumption and its predictors among women from selected regions in Uganda.

Methods: A baseline cross-sectional survey was conducted by the International Potato Centre among 617 sweet potato growing households, focusing on women in the reproductive age group from the northern and eastern regions of Uganda. Data included vitamin A-rich food consumption, dietary intake using a food frequency questionnaire, and a 24-hour recall. Vitamin A consumption was computed using the Hellen Keller International guide.

Results: The majority of women in this study were either lactating (79.6%) and/or pregnant (16.8%). More than 70% of the study population had a weighted vitamin A-rich food consumption mean score of < 6 days per week, indicating a high risk of vitamin A deficiency of the population. Knowledge about vitamin A ($b(SE) = -0.18 (0.50)$, $p < 0.001$) inversely predicted vitamin A-rich food consumption. Variables including individual dietary diversity, household size, educational attainment and age were not associated with vitamin A rich food consumption.

Conclusions: The study provides evidence on the association between nutrition knowledge and consumption of Vitamin A-rich foods, suggesting that development and delivery of biofortified foods such as orange-fleshed sweet potatoes (an initiative of the International Potato Center), can further improve vitamin A status when combined with nutrition education.

Funding Sources: International Potato Center/Uganda and the University of Massachusetts Amherst.