

Policy on healthy practices to improve the nutritional status of children under 5 years of age

Abstract

In the jungle region of Peru, child malnutrition rates are still high, which is reflected in the lack of comprehensive policies that promote healthy feeding practices for children under 5 years of age. Therefore, there is little implementation of regional strategies to address nutritional problems in the child population. The objective was to evaluate the reality of a policy based on healthy practices to improve the nutritional status of children under 5 years of age in the region. The type of research was basic, the design was based on a systematic review based on previous studies, evaluations and data collected in the San Martín region. The population and sample were mothers of children under 5 years of age residing in the San Martín region, whose nutritional and feeding data were collected in studies and official records. A systematic review methodology was used to analyze the effectiveness of the regional policy on healthy practices. The instruments included databases, health records and evaluations of implemented programs. This review article examines the strategies, programs and outcomes of regional policy in order to evaluate their effectiveness in addressing malnutrition and improving the quality of life of children in this geographic area. Results, the healthy practices policy demonstrated a significant improvement in the nutritional status of children under 5 years of age in the San Martín region. A reduction in malnutrition rates and an increase in the adoption of healthier eating habits was observed. In conclusion, based on the articles reviewed, the implementation of a policy focused on healthy practices is successful in improving the nutritional status of children under 5 years of age in the San Martín region. Additionally, the importance of continuing to promote evidence-based interventions to address childhood malnutrition and promote appropriate eating habits from an early age is highlighted.

Keywords: malnutrition, public policy, healthy practices

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Introduction

Malnutrition and chronic malnutrition are public health problems that affect many children under 5 years of age in various regions of the world, including Saint Martin. Lack of access to adequate food, poverty and lack of nutrition education are contributing factors to this problem.¹⁻⁸ In response to this worrying situation, in 2023, a regional policy was implemented in San Martín with the objective of promoting healthy practices that improve the nutritional status of children in this critical stage of development.

Methods

To conduct this review, information was collected through a variety of sources, including government reports, academic studies, surveys, and testimonials from health professionals and the local community. The structure and approaches of regional policy were analyzed, as well as the specific programs implemented to improve child nutrition in the region.⁹⁻¹⁵

Results

The regional policy on healthy practices to improve the nutritional status of children under 5 years of age in San Martín has focused on several key areas: Promotion of breastfeeding: Awareness and support programs were implemented to encourage exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of the child's life.¹⁶⁻²⁴ Friendly spaces for nursing mothers were established in health centers and public places to facilitate breastfeeding anytime, anywhere.

Dietary diversification: Educational programs aimed at parents and caregivers have been promoted to teach them about the importance of a balanced and varied diet for young children. Emphasis has been placed on the early and appropriate introduction of nutrient-rich complementary foods. Growth monitoring and control: The capacities of local health centers have been strengthened to carry out regular monitoring of the growth and development of children under 5 years of age.²⁵⁻³⁶ This allows possible nutrition problems to be identified early and timely interventions provided. Food security: Strategies have been implemented to improve food security in vulnerable households, guaranteeing access to nutritious and sufficient food for families.³⁷⁻⁴⁸

Discussion

The regional policy on healthy practices to improve the nutritional status of children under 5 years of age in San Martín has shown significant progress. The promotion of breastfeeding and food diversification have been essential to combat child malnutrition. Education and appropriate monitoring have increased awareness of the importance of adequate nutrition and facilitated the early detection of cases of malnutrition.⁴⁹⁻⁵⁶

However, it is recognized that there are still challenges to be faced. The persistence of poverty and lack of access to basic services in some rural areas hinders the effective implementation of the policy throughout the region.⁵⁷⁻

⁶⁸ It is essential to maintain the focus on equity and inclusion, ensuring that all families, regardless of their geographic location

or economic situation, have access to the resources and knowledge necessary to improve their children's nutrition.^{69–79}

Conclusion

The policy on healthy practices to improve the nutritional status of children under 5 years of age in the San Martín region has been an important step towards reducing child malnutrition. The combination of strategies focused on breastfeeding, dietary diversification, growth monitoring, and food security have proven effective in addressing this public health challenge.

However, it is crucial to continue strengthening the implementation of the policy, with a special focus on the most vulnerable communities. In addition, continuous monitoring and systematic evaluation of results should be carried out to identify areas for improvement and adapt interventions according to the changing needs of the population. Only through a collective and sustained effort will a lasting impact be achieved on the nutritional status of children under 5 years of age in the San Martín region.

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Conflicts of interest

There is no Conflicts of interest.

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