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Nutritional status and quality of life of older persons on Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE) in Kampala City, Central Uganda

Daniel Hendry Ruma^{1*} , Joy Francesca Tumusiime¹, Faith Muyonga Namayengo¹ and Norman Paul Shapiro¹

Abstract

Background Population ageing is a growing public health concern. Despite the Ugandan Government's efforts, like the Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE) programme, malnutrition and poor Quality of Life (QoL) are still older persons' challenges. This study assessed the nutritional status and QoL of older persons on the SAGE programme in Kampala City, Central Uganda.

Methodology A cross-sectional study with a quantitative research approach was conducted. Data was collected in 2025 among 159 persons aged 80 years and above using a 24-hour recall, the 26-item World Health Organisation BREF, and anthropometric assessments. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, chi-square, analysis of variance, and regression. Statistical significance was read at $p < 0.05$.

Results The mean (SD) meal frequency was 1.95 ± 0.81 , dietary diversity score (DDS) was 6.69 ± 2.77 in the past 24 h, and Body Mass Index (BMI) was $22.8 \pm 4.5 \text{ kg/m}^2$. Intake of meat (16.7%), fruits (14.6%) and eggs (10.2%) was low. Underweight, overweight, and obesity prevalence were 18.9%, 22.6%, and 8.2%, respectively. Underweight odds were lower in males (AOR = 0.36, CI: 0.14–0.92, $p = 0.032$) and persons who consumed ≥ 3 meals (AOR = 0.04, CI: 0.01–0.34, $p = 0.003$). The odds of overweight/obesity were higher among males (AOR = 2.01, CI: 1.36–2.69, $p = 0.041$). The mean (SD) overall QoL score was 52.27 ± 15.75 , with 23.3% of respondents having a good QoL. Males had higher odds of a poor QoL (AOR = 2.45, CI: 1.53–3.04, $p = 0.021$), while having secondary or higher education (AOR = 0.25, CI: 0.11–0.57, $p < 0.001$) and other income sources (AOR = 0.32, CI: 0.28–1.38, $p = 0.027$) protected against a poor QoL.

Conclusion The study highlights a double burden of malnutrition and poor QoL linked to sex, socioeconomic and dietary factors among older persons on the SAGE programme. This points to challenges emanating from gender and policy disparities among older persons in Uganda.

Keywords Kampala, Nutritional status, Older persons, Quality of life, SAGE

*Correspondence:

Daniel Hendry Ruma
dhruma@kyu.ac.ug

¹Department of Nutritional Science and Dietetics, Kyambogo University, Kampala, Uganda



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