



## Understanding Malnutrition in Tanna after cyclone Judy and Kevin: A Cross Sectional Survey

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### Abstract text

**Background:** Malnutrition remains a health concern among children in Tanna, despite ongoing efforts to address it. The evident increase of 147 admissions to Lenakel Hospital and 15 deaths due to malnutrition has prompted a need for survey among the general population. This abstract summarizes the findings of a cross sectional survey conducted to assess the prevalence of malnutrition in Tanna after cyclone Judy and Kevin

**Methods:** The study encompassed a cross-sectional survey of nutritional status among children from age 6 months to 60 months around Tanna, along with a tailored interview as an investigation into the socio-economic and cultural factors contributing to malnutrition. A random sample of 1268 were surveyed, ages 6 to 60 months, in seventy one communities and five health centres across Tanna using anthropometric measurements, demographics and a standard interview tailored toward assessing factors contributing to malnutrition.

**Results:** The results revealed a 4% prevalence of malnourished children in the surveyed population, and a 10% prevalence of underweight children with the risk of becoming malnourished. Furthermore the tailored interview to determine contributing factors ranked accordingly as; poor nutritional knowledge - 40%, early weaning of children - 30%, lack of access to health care - 15%, and lack of family support 10% among others as contributing factors to malnutrition respectively. Malnourished children surveyed were referred to Lenakel Hospital for admission.

**Discussion:** The survey highlights the prevalence of malnutrition and the components contributing to malnutrition in communities of Tanna. Children are more likely to be malnourished as mothers lack awareness of child nutrition, poor health accessibility, and poor family support among other components. Addressing the main contributing factors, the population can strive to improve the nutritional well being for children in Tanna and their future.