

Determinants of Children's Fruit Intake in Teso South Sub-County, Kenya—A Multi-Phase Mixed Methods Study among Households with Children 0–8 Years of Age

Fruits are micronutrient-rich sources which are often underrepresented in children's diets. More insights into the determinants of children's fruit consumption are needed to improve nutrition education in Teso South Sub-County, Kenya. A multiphase mixed method study was applied among 48 farm households with children 0–8 years of age. A market survey together with focus group discussions were used to design a formative research approach including qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The unavailability of fruits and the inability to plant fruit trees in the homesteads were the main challenges to improve fruit consumption behaviour, although a number of different fruit species were available on the market or in households. Perceived shortage of fruits, financial constraints to purchase fruits and taste were important barriers. Fruits as snacks given between meals was perceived as helpful to satisfy children. The mean number of fruit trees in the homesteads was positively associated with fruit consumption. Field trials are needed to test how best fruit trees within home gardens and on farms can be included, acknowledging limited space and constraints of households with young children. This should be combined with nutrition education programs addressing perceptions about the social and nutrient value of fruits for children.