

ABSTRACT

Consumption of milk by children below five years has been on the decline especially in developing countries. This is despite it being a rich source of proteins and containing all the essential amino acids and other nutrients. The aim of this study was to establish the milk consumption patterns of children (24-59 months) from dairy and non-dairy households from peri-urban (Bahati) and rural (Olenguruone) areas in Nakuru County. A cross-sectional study was conducted in the households using semi-structured questionnaires. A multi stage cluster sampling was applied and 216 households with primary caregivers and at least one child aged 24-59 months randomly settled. Chi-square and T-tests were used to compare differences between means of dairy and non-dairy households in peri-urban/ rural areas. Multiple linear regression tests were performed to determine the relationship between socio-economic characteristics, child dietary diversity and milk consumption of children at $\alpha=0.05$ level of significance. Findings indicated that milk tea was the common form of milk consumed in all households (DHs, NDHs) in both peri-urban and rural areas. The prevalence of milk consumption among children based on data from the food groups was (57.4% in DHs vs 40.3% in NDHs) in peri-urban while in the rural area 80.3% (DHs) and 72.2% (NDHs) of the children had consumed milk in the previous day. The rate at which the children consumed milk however did not translate to the actual amounts which were low. Children's mean intake of milk was 285.5 ± 214.6 mls in DHs and 222.3 ± 90.6 mls in NDHs while in peri-urban and rural areas the mean intake was 215.7 ± 85.6 mls and 292.4 ± 216.6 mls respectively. This was far below the WHO minimum recommended intake of 500mls per day. Children's mean intakes of milk were significantly different among the DHs vs NDHs (0.005) and peri-urban vs rural areas (0.001). The linear regression model revealed that having a dairy cow increased the daily milk intake by children. Based on the study findings there is need for nutrition interventions that would promote consumption of milk in children.

Keywords: Caregivers., Dairy Households, Milk Consumption, Non-Dairy Households, children