

## **NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF DIFFERENTLY ABLED CHILDREN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Poor nutritional status and growth failure are common in children with neurological impairment. Various results confirm the significant impact of neurological impairment in children on body growth and nutritional status becoming worse in, those with a greater degree of motor impairment and thus affecting their nutrient intake and their nutritional status. The objective of the study was to study the nutritional status of differently abled children. The study is a prospective study and purposive random sampling technique was adopted. The study comprised of 57 differently abled children aged 0-6 yrs of both sexes. An interview schedule was used to elicit general information from the subjects. 20 percent of the subjects belonged to the age group of 3.1-4 yrs. The study comprised of a higher male: female ratio of 70:30. Neurological impairment commonly noticed in the study group. On analysis of the anthropometric measurements, 25 percent were found to have protein energy malnutrition, while 75 percent were found to be normal. There was a significant relationship between the neurological impairment and the anthropometric measurements of the subjects. An energy deficit of 50 percent in terms of nutrient intake was seen in cerebral palsy subjects. A similar trend was seen in all subjects irrespective of the type of neurological disorder. It was observed that most subjects with cerebral palsy were unable to feed themselves compared to those children affected by various other neurological disorders. A majority (57%) of CP subjects were found to have dysphagia, 21.4 % of ADHD subjects experienced refusal to eat and 17 % of autism subjects were found to have refusal to eat and spitting of food. Poor nutritional status of these children may be attributed to the poor nutritional knowledge among parents and improper dietary habits initiated at early childhood. Hence appropriate nutrition intervention which focuses on early nutrition counseling for the parents of these children would go a long way in improving their nutritional status.