

Children's nutritional status is a reflection of their overall health. When children have access to an adequate food supply, are not exposed to repeated illness and are well cared for, they reach their growth potential and are considered well nourished.

In a well nourished population there is a standard distribution of height and weight for children under age five. Under-nourishment in a population can be measured by comparing children to this standard distribution. By determining if children have deviated from this standard distribution, one is able to measure if a child is *underweight*, *stunted* or *wasted*.



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According to the
Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
2005 Preliminary Report

NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF CHILDREN

in Tajikistan is
PROBLEMATIC

*Child Nutritional Status Prevalence Rates
Tajikistan, 2005*

Underweight	17%
Stunting	27%
Wasting	7%
Global Acute Malnutrition	11%

STUNTING IN CHILDREN...

... is the effect of chronic malnutrition as a result of failure to receive adequate nutrition over a long period of time and/ or recurrent or chronic illness. In Tajikistan, around one in four children under-5 (or 27 percent) is stunted... that is to say that they are too short for their age. Of these about 9 percent are severely stunted.

Wasting is usually the result of a recent nutritional deficiency. The indicator may exhibit seasonal shifts associated with changes in the availability of food and/ or disease prevalence. Seven percent of those children surveyed could be classified as wasted.

Finally, the survey found that slightly less than 1 in 5 children under-5 (or 17 percent) are underweight. Children are considered underweight if they weigh too little for their age, a result of being stunted, wasted, or both. About 4 percent of children under-five are severely underweight.

Prevalence rates of underweight and stunted children were highest in the Khatlon and GBAO regions, while the lowest rates were found in Dushanbe. Prevalence rates of wasted children were highest in Khatlon and lowest in Sogd.

Children of educated mothers (those with at least some secondary education) were less likely to be underweight and/or stunted than those whose mothers had no education or just some primary education

Boys and girls prevalence rates for underweight and wasting levels are roughly equal with boys slightly more likely to be stunted than girls.

The age pattern shows that a higher percentage of children aged 12-23 months are underweight or wasted as compared to children of other ages (Figure 1). However, for stunting the levels reach a plateau during the second to fifth year of life. This pattern is expected and is related to the age at which many children cease to be breastfed and are continuously exposed to contamination from the water, food and the environment.

The mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) and the presence of oedema were two indicators used to assess for the presence of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) in children aged 12 - 59 months. Eleven percent of children fall within the definition of GAM.

The highest rate was observed in Khatlon (14 percent). The prevalence of GAM was also higher in children from the poorest quintile (13 percent) as compared to children from the richest quintile (10 percent).

MICS 3 SURVEY OBJECTIVES

The 2005 Tajikistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) has as its primary objectives:

To provide up-to-date information for assessing the situation of children and women in Tajikistan;

To furnish data needed for monitoring progress toward goals established by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the goals of A World Fit For Children (WFFC) as a basis for future action;

To contribute to the improvement of data and monitoring systems in Tajikistan and to strengthen technical expertise in the design, implementation, and analysis of such systems.

This MICS 3 preliminary report presents selected results on a variety of principal topics covered in the survey and on a subset of indicators. As specified, the results in the report are preliminary and are subject to change, although major changes are not expected. A comprehensive full report is scheduled for publication in spring 2007.

KEY RESULTS:

- The highest underweight as well as stunting prevalence rates are in Khatlon and GBAO, while the lowest are found in Dushanbe.
- Children of educated mothers are less likely to be underweight and/or stunted than those whose mothers have little or no education
- Boys are slightly more likely than girls to be stunted.
- GAM is highest in children from the poorest quintile.

