

Original Article

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THE USE OF CHANGES IN HAIR ROOT MORPHOLOGY IN THE ASSESSMENT OF PROTEIN-CALORIE MALNUTRITION

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Abstract

A study was carried out to evaluate the use of changes in hair root morphology in the assessment of protein-calorie malnutrition (PCM) among a group of Black West Indian children.

Significant differences in mean shaft diameter, mean % anagen, and mean % telogen were found only between the well-nourished and the severely malnourished groups. No significant differences in mean % atrophy, and in mean diameter of anagen bulbs were found among well-nourished children, children with mild-moderated PCM, severely malnourished children, and children hospitalized for conditions with a secondary effect on nutritional status.

The method was found to be time consuming; it can be used only for differentiating well-nourished from severely malnourished children; and it cannot be used for determining well-nourished from severely malnourished children; and it cannot be used for determining the prevalence of the different degrees of PCM. For these reasons, the method is not recommended for use in the field assessment of PCM.

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