

Nutritional Status and Menarche in Adolescents of Punjab

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ABSTRACT Malnutrition results from imbalance between the needs of the body and intake of nutrients. The present cross-sectional study was carried out on 417 girls, in the age range of 11 to 16 years and residing in Barnala and Mansa Districts of Punjab. The data was collected from January to April, 2010. The aim of the study was to assess the nutritional status of adolescent females on the basis of BMI- for- age and height - for - age and to determine the association between age at menarche and nutritional status (BMI - for - age). The menarcheal status (whether experienced or not) was taken as the criterion of maturity. Out of the total sample, 64.51 percent adolescent girls were thin and 44.36 percent girls were associated with minor stunting and 59.23 percent girls had experienced menarche. The median age at menarche of the present overall sample was 13.25 ± 0.65 years. The median age at menarche separately for undernourished and normal girls, was found to be 13.5 ± 0.7 years and 12.7 ± 0.5 years. It has been observed that menarche is delayed due to undernutrition and as the nutritional status improves, attainment of menarche is lowered.