

Can Sri Lanka Achieve Global Nutritional Targets by 2025? Time Series Analysis from 2012 to 2020

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It is imperative to grasp both present levels and historical patterns related to nutritional indices, in anticipating future trends to enhance the nutritional well-being of children under five years of age in Sri Lanka. This study was done to examine the recent trends of low birth weight (LBW), stunting and wasting among under five years old children between 2012 and 2020 and to predict these indicators for another five years to see whether Sri Lanka could achieve the global nutritional targets by 2025. Data on child nutrition indices between 2012 and 2020 were obtained from published data from the Ministry of Health and Family Health Bureau. Joint point regression analysis was performed using the JoinPoint Regression Program Version 5.1.0.0. The software takes trend data and fits the simplest join point model that the data allows. Trends were estimated based on the annual percent change from 2012 to 2020. All three indicators, LBW, stunting and wasting, decreased from 2012 to 2020 by 0.4%, 4.1% and 5 %, respectively. If these trends persist, LBW is projected to reach 15.5% by 2025, showing the least improvement. Stunting and wasting are expected to decrease to 8.0% and 8.4%, respectively, by 2025. However, all three indicators are anticipated to be above the global nutritional targets for children under five by 2025. Thus, based on the joint point regression method assessing, the current trends, Sri Lanka would not be able to achieve the global nutritional country-specific target by 2025.

Keywords: Stunting, Wasting, Low Birth Weight, Global Nutrition Target