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The health and nutritional status of school children in two rural communities in Sri Lanka.

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Source

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Abstract

There is growing evidence of considerable burden of morbidity and mortality due to infectious diseases and undernutrition in school children. This study describes the nutritional status and parasitic infections of school children in two areas of rural Sri Lanka. All children in four primary schools in the Moneragala district of Sri Lanka were included in the study. The height and weight of children were measured and anthropometric indices calculated. Stool and blood samples were examined for evidence of intestinal helminthiasis, malaria and anaemia. A greater proportion of boys than girls were underweight, wasted and stunted. Over 80% of the children were anaemic but did not apparently have iron deficiency anaemia according to their blood picture. The prevalence of parasitic infections such as hookworm and *Plasmodium* spp that may contribute to anaemia was low.