A healthy and nutritionally well-fed population is indispensable for economic growth and development. The interaction between inadequate dietary intake and disease leads to malnutrition, disability and death. Insufficient access to food, inappropriate caring practices such as improper feeding practices, poor environment, inadequate health services and low women status play a major role in catalyzing the whole process. Despite numerous nutrition interventions in developing countries, the nutritional status of children under five years of age has continued to deteriorate. Feeding practices have a strong influence on children's nutritional status and are considered to be factors, which can be modified to prevent ill health in children under five years of age.

The purpose of the study was to assess child feeding practices and nutritional status of children under five years of age. The study was carried out in Kware Slum of Ongata Rongai, Kajiado District. The sample consisted 194 preschool children.

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, spot observation and anthropometric measurements. Data were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies and standard deviation were used to describe and summarize the data. Chi-square test and Pearson's correlation coefficient were used to test for association between nutritional status and independent variables of interest.

Anthropometric data were analyzed using the z-scores in relation to the National Center for Health Statistics reference values.

Research findings revealed that malnutrition exists in Kware Slum with 26.8% of the children being stunted, 23.3% children being underweight and 10.8% being wasted. Mothers' marital status, age and education level were not significantly associated to the nutritional status of the children. Findings of the study revealed that protein intake (r=0.16, p = 0.04), type of meal service ($x^2 = 5.639$, df = 1 $p = 0.018$) and the person who feeds the child ($x^2 =8.887$, df = 2 $p = 0.012$) had significant association with the children's height-for-age.

There is evidence of the critical role of childcare practices as a key input into children's nutritional status. Optimal child feeding practices contribute to the prevention of growth failure and this benefit may linger long beyond the first five years of a child's life. Good childcare practices also have a positive effect on children's nutritional status particularly among children from poorer families.