

Use of Body Mass Index (BMI) Levels as a Measure of Health Status

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Health is defined as the complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Physical well being of people are categorized into many forms which include fitness, strength and energy. Body Mass Index (BMI), Blood pressure, Blood sugar, and Cholesterol are some important measurements used to measure the physical well being of people.

Body Mass Index (BMI) is one of the common methods used to measure the physical well being of elderly people. The formula to calculate BMI is $\text{weight}/\text{height}^2$. The normal BMI level is 18-25. A BMI <18 indicates malnutrition whereas BMI levels > 25 shows obesity. BMI levels could be controlled by taking a balanced meal.

A health promotion camp was held at the Madankalla Sribodhi Vidyalaya situated in the Mihintale MOH (Medical Office House) area for Public Health Midwives. During the camp attention was focused on measuring the physical well being of the participant villagers using BMI levels and on improving their knowledge on nutrition, renal failure, alcohol and tobacco use. BMI measurements indicated that 37.6% of the participant women had high risk BMI levels while several others showed malnutrition as indicated by low level BMI. Ten percent of the participants were diabetic and one was a TB patient. Health problems among participants were diagnosed and participant knowledge and attitudes towards their health status were improved through this health camp.