



EFFECT OF DIETARY DIVERSITY ON STUNTING OF CHILDREN IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Stunting in developing economies like Nigeria is strongly linked to diets consumed by children of less than five (5) years. This linkage matters as food dietary diversity is linked to food and security. The paper addressed a gap in the literature on how dietary diversity is linked to stunting children of less than five (5) years in Nigeria. The study used panel data from the three waves of the Living Standard Measurement survey of households in Nigeria, a representative of Africa's most populous nation. Our empirical approach includes instrumental variable regressions with household random effects to account for time-invariant unobserved and observed characteristics that could jointly determine stunting. Dietary diversity was found to reduce the probability of wasting in children by an average of 1.33 at the 0.01 level of significance while food prices was found to reduce dietary diversity by an average of 0.03 at the 0.01 level of significance. These findings are relevant to future policies on stabilizing food prices and nutrition education for mothers to improve the nutrition of their children.

Keywords: Dietary Diversity, Food Prices, Instrumental Variable, Probit, Stunting.