

Medical Checks for Children

Medical Report

Kolkata 2014-2019

Comparison 5 years

Summary

Since 2014 Medical Checks for Children (MCC) has a very good collaboration with the Young Mens Welfare School.

The Young Men's Welfare Society was founded in 1976 with the blessings and patronage of Nobel Laureate Late Mother Teresa. His Holiness the Dalai Lama came to Kolkata on the 15th January 2007 and inaugurated their 40th anniversary celebrations. YMWS has until date provided pre- primary and primary education to 65,000 under-privileged children. In 2014, after 30 years of focusing on education and knowlodge, Mr Mukherji thought the time was there to broaden this focus to health.

MCC conducted a medical camp for 5 times at Raghunathpur, Joynagar and Bhagawatipur, in the West Bengal region, District South 24 Parganas, South of Kolkata. In 2016 we conducted one time a medical camp in the Sunderbans region. In 2017 and 2019 we also conducted a medical camp at Diksha Evening School in Kolkata and in 2019 we conducted a medical camp at Maulana Azad Evening School in Kolkata.

The children we checked are attending pre-primary (nursery) and primary schools in the underprivileged rural areas in the West Bengalen, District South 24 Parganas, the Sunderbans and 2 slums in the City of Kolkata who all have limited access to medical facilities

In total we checked and treated, 1068 in 2014, 1052 in 2015, 968 in 2016, 726 in 2017 and 832 children in 2019. The main group of children was between 3 and 9 years of age.

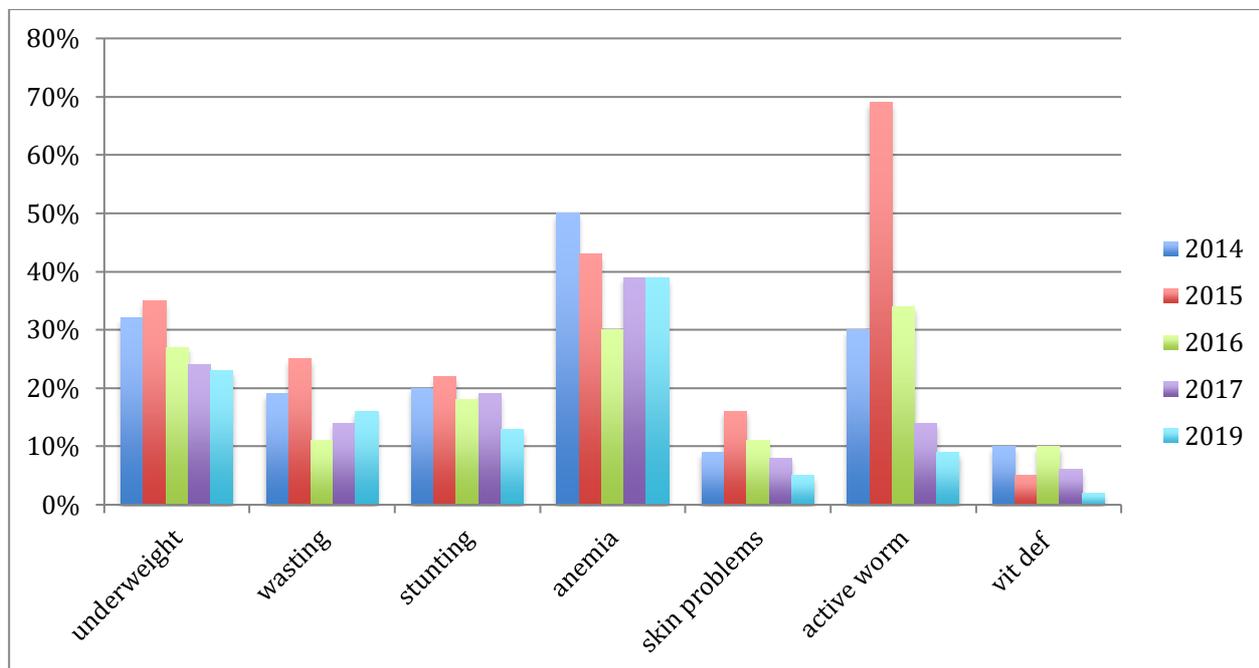
The team of MCC is impressed about the local organization in what they have a achieved in the last 5 years at the rural schools. When we conducted the first medical camp in 2014 there was little awareness of health and hygiene. During the last 5 years a food program, dental program, enviromental studies and hand wash programs are incorporated in the daily routine and classes in the school. Even 2 handwash staions were build at Yognagar and Rhagunathpur schools.

The main purpose of this last medical missioon was to provide the local organization with more tools and education so that the health program achived at the 3 rural schools also can be implemented at other schools of the local organization. Therefore Maulana Azad school was also added the last year so we and all the teachers and members of YMWS could transfer there knowlodge to other schools.

Since 2016 we stared a collaboratin with Dr. Apratim, dentist, who already conducted several Dental camps throughout the years at the rural schools.

In summary most medical problems we identified are: Worm problems, Anemia, Tooth decay, Malnutrition, Vitamin deficiency and Skin problems. All these problems can mainly be treated by prevention in hygienic, healthy food and tooth brushing.

5 years comparison overall



* Baghuwatipur, Rangunathpur, Joynagar

** 2016 also Sunderbans included

***2017 also Diksha included

****2019 also Diksha en Maulana included

Concerning the data we have to keep in mind that we a couple of children have been seen for more years but in general we saw different children in the last 5 years. This makes it difficult to analyse the data over the years and draw definite conclusions. However, in general we see an improvement off general health. There is an awareness of health en preventive programs are effective in improving health in children at the school in in tis region. Specifically we look at stunting. Stunting is the impaired growth and development that children experience from poor nutrition, repeated infection, and inadequate psychosocial stimulation. Children are defined as stunted if their height-for-age is more than two standard deviations below the WHO Child Growth Standards median.

Stunting in early life -- particularly in the first 1000 days from conception until the age of two - impaired growth has adverse functional consequences on the child. Some of those consequences include poor cognition and educational performance, low adult wages, lost productivity and, when accompanied by excessive weight gain later in childhood, an increased risk of nutrition-related chronic diseases in adult life.

Furthermore we found a decrease in worm infections and less vitamin deficiency from 2014 to 2019. This is probably also an effect from better food and hygiene.

Future

During the last 5 years we saw a tremendous increase in the awareness of health especially at the rural schools. The teachers incorporated hygiene and tooth brushing in their daily routine. Moreover the teachers and children teach each other in these topics during environmental classes. Furthermore in Bhagawatipur and in Joynagar a special handwash station has been built. The food program consisting of one boiled egg, a glass of milk and one banana is an extra support for children to receive the nutrients they require.

A major concern is the enormous increase of eating candies, junk food and waste food. First of all, because of this children have a poor appetite for healthy food such as fruit and vegetables. This will cause malnutrition and obesity. The incidence of children with obesity is increasing. Furthermore, the increased use of unhealthy food, together with not or inadequate tooth brushing increase the incidence of dental problems. We found an enormous amount of children with tooth decay.

We recommend going on with the food program at school, twice a day tooth brushing at school and provide free toothpaste and toothbrushes. Daily hand washing in the morning and after toilet and eating. Every 6 months anti-worm treatment can be given. Children with underweight in combination with frequent infections can be given multivitamins. Children with severe malnutrition should be checked at least every 6 months. A lot of children complain about stomach pain and constipation. Causes of this are lack of drinking enough water, worm infections and not eating fruit and vegetables that contains extra fibers.

We recommend a dental camp that at least every child is checked once a year. We recommend that the teachers on the school not only teach the children, but also to do home visits and teach the parents and children at home. Furthermore we think that the schools could be an example in supporting a healthy life style by forbidden the children to take/ eat any junk food or drinks at the school. Along with this, we would recommend to incorporate mental health in the school. Teaching the parents in good parenthood, performing home visits and identify child abuse.

We think that the next couple of years YMWS is able to deal with these problems by themselves as MCC gave enough knowledge and materials.

Thank you.

On behalf of all medical teams from the last 5 years.

Véronique Schram & Ilse Westerbeek

Medical checks for children

The Netherlands

