

# Determinants of dietary and physical activity behaviours among women of reproductive age in urban Uganda, a qualitative study

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## Abstract

### Objective:

To explore determinants of dietary and physical activity behaviours among women of reproductive age.

### Design:

Data were collected through focus group discussions (FGD). The FGD guide was based on a

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of health belief model, precaution adoption process model, social cognitive and social support theory. Discussions were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically.

### Setting:

Kampala, Uganda.

### Participants:

Women were categorised into young adults; 18–34 years and adults; 35–45 years

### Results:

Separate FGD with independent participants were conducted for dietary and physical activity behaviours until data saturation was achieved. Six FGD were conducted per behaviour. Determinants of dietary behaviours at intra-individual level included gaps in food skills, knowledge and self-efficacy, food safety concerns, convenience, finances and physiological satisfaction. The social-cultural norms were relationship between vegetable consumption and low social status, consideration of fruits as a snack for children and not food and habitual orientation towards carbohydrate foods. At environment level, social networks and increased availability of energy-dense, nutrient poor, street and processed foods influence dietary behaviour. For physical activity, intra-individual determinants were knowledge gaps and self-efficacy, while socio-cultural norms included gender stereotypes. Home (limited space and sedentary entertainment like social media and TV) and physical environment (cheap motorised transportation) influence physical activity.

### Conclusion:

The existing cultural beliefs promote dietary and physical activity behaviours which are divergent from healthy recommendations. Therefore, a comprehensive intervention is needed to address socio-cultural misconceptions, financial and time limitations in urban Uganda.

## Keywords

Physical activity

Dietary behaviour

Women of reproductive age

Urban Uganda

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