

## Baseline survey for use of indigenous vegetables to combat vitamin A deficiency in Kenya

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**Abstract** Vitamin A deficiency (VAD) remains an important public health problem in developing countries like Kenya. To combat the problem, agricultural methods that increase production, distribution and consumption of vitamin A rich foods have been recommended as the best long-term approach. It was hypothesised that targeting increased production and consumption of indigenous vegetables could help reduce the problem of VAD. The objective was to determine whether there was sufficient evidence of dietary deficiency of vitamin A in Butere-Mumias district in Kenya to warrant a nutrition-based intervention. A baseline survey implementing the semi-quantitative food frequency methodology for assessing dietary deficiency of vitamin A at the community level was used. In addition, indigenous vegetables were planted on farm and their provitamin A content determined. The results showed vitamin A to be deficient in the area. Indigenous vegetables had adequate amounts of provitamin A that, if consumed in sufficient quantities, would supply the required daily amounts of vitamin A. Nutrition education needed to inform consumers the importance of vitamin A and the need for more consumption of indigenous green leafy vegetables to combat the problem of vitamin A in the area.

**Key words:** Beta-Carotene, *cleome gynandra*, *solanum nigrum*