

**FOOD SECURITY AND COPING STRATEGIES AMONG REFUGEES IN
ADJUMANI DISTRICT, UGANDA**

NAMBUYA ESTHER

2014/HD07/1150U

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH DISASTER MANAGEMENT

SUPERVISORS;

DR. RICHARD MUGAMBE

DR. ROBERT NTALO

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO MAKERERE UNIVERSITY AS PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH
DISASTER MANAGEMENT DEGREE**

JANUARY 2017

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Refugees are vulnerable to household food insecurity owing to up rootedness. Displacement is a major shock for people and is often associated with breakdown in livelihoods and loss of entitlements leading to undernutrition and food insecurity.

Objective: This study assessed household food security and its associated factors and explored coping strategies adopted to improve household food security in Adjumani refugee settlements.

Methods: The study was cross-sectional conducted in two refugee settlements in Adjumani District. Data was collected using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data was collected using an interviewer-administered questionnaire from 426 household heads. Qualitative data was collected using focus group discussion guide to measure the coping strategies. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize socio-demographic characteristics. The HFIAP was used to measure and categorize household food security status. Binary logistic regression was used to establish the relationship between the household food security status and socio-demographic characteristics given the existence of several confounding variables. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common coping strategy themes adopted by the refugees to improve food security status.

Results: Majority (78%) of the households were found to be severely food insecure, 18% moderately food insecure, 2% mildly food insecure and only 2% were found to be food secure. Factors that were significantly associated with household food security status included being widowed (AOR 2.21, 95% CI: 1.23, 3.98), not owning livestock (AOR 1.95, 95% CI: 1.10, 3.50) and having lived in the refugee settlement more than 2 years (AOR 0.49, 95% CI: 0.26, 0.94). Food security coping strategies adopted include; reducing number of meals eaten per day, limiting portion size, borrowing food, begging and sharing food with neighbors, adult buffering, going whole day without food, purchasing food, walking to the reception center and backyard gardening.

Conclusion and recommendations: The prevalence of food insecurity among refugee households in Adjumani was high. Marital status, length of stay and owning livestock are important determinants of household food security status. During this period several coping strategies were adopted by the refugees to improve household food security. Humanitarian agencies should come up with interventions to empower the refugees to acquire sustainable livelihoods that will enable them to become resilient and improve their household food

security status. Such interventions can include setting up microfinance institutions that give the refugees livestock instead of cash and building capacity of refugees to be able to cultivate food amidst limited resources of land such as horizontal farming.