

Growth after nutritional deprivation

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To investigate growth following a period of severe malnutrition in early life, we have studied longitudinally 2 groups of children and their mothers: the first one who had suffered protein energy malnutrition early in life and required treatment in a close nutritional recovery center, and a second (control group) from the same socioeconomic environment, but well nourished. Both groups were matched for sex and age, and were followed by the same professional team for 9 years. We found a significant difference in size at birth which favored the control group. Anthropometry in mothers of both groups followed the same trend as birth weight. In children, while there was a significant difference in height/age and weight/age ratios, no difference in weight/height ratios between both groups was noticed, and no variations in bone age. Growth velocity was significantly greater in control girls. These findings show that malnutrition before 2 years of age may produce long-term effects on growth in