

Discussion The NNMB for the first time carried out the study in all the states of South India covering large state representative sample and this communication, for the first time reporting the prevalence of clinical and sub-clinical VAD among the rural pre-school children of South India. The proportion rural pre-school children with clinical and sub-clinical VAD were higher in North India as compared to their counterparts in South India, where the corresponding figures of Bitot's spot and sub-clinical VAD were 0.9% and 64%, respectively.^{1*} The prevalence of Bitot's spots was lower in the present study as compared to the figures reported for rural pre-school children of Bihar (4.7%),² Maharashtra, (C) Madhya Pradesh (1.4%),^{3*} eight NNMB states of India (0.8%) and central India (2.2%).⁴ Similarly, a higher prevalence of Bitot's spot was reported among the pre-school children of chronic drought affected states.^{5*} While, the prevalence was comparable with figures reported for the rural pre-school children of West Bengal (0.6%).^{6*} Similarly, a higher proportion of rural pre-school children of North India (64%),^{7*} Madhya Pradesh (88%)^{8*}, West Bengal (61.2%) and eight NNMB states of India (61.8%) had sub-clinical VAD, while a lower prevalence of sub-clinical VAD was reported for the rural pre-school children of Maharashtra⁹ as compared to children in South India. Furthermore, the prevalence of VAD was significantly higher (p