FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH NUTRITION KNOWLEDGE AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN LAIKIPIA COUNTY, KENYA.

Background
Nutrition knowledge plays an important role in public health. It is one of the factors that affects the nutritional habits of individuals, families and communities. It provides a good foundation for making proper decisions regarding food choice and nutrition practices. In order to effectively promote acquisition of nutrition knowledge, attitude and practices among pupils, insight into factors that are associated with nutrition knowledge in both home and school environments is necessary.

Main Outcome Measures and analysis
Data was collected on demographic characteristics, socioeconomic characteristics, nutrition knowledge scores. The nutrition knowledge was assessed using a specifically designed 20-item questionnaire. Chi square tests, Pearson correlation coefficient and logistic regression were used to determine association between variables.

Results and findings

The age of the respondents was not significantly associated with the mean nutrition knowledge score. The marital status of the parents and their occupation were not significantly associated with the nutrition knowledge level. Ownership of a television set was significantly associated with the level of nutrition knowledge (p = 0.016). Pupils whose families owned a television set had higher levels of nutrition knowledge compared to pupils whose families did not own a television set.

The source of lighting used by the respondents at home was significantly associated with their level of nutrition knowledge (p = 0.000). The respondents who used solar energy for lighting had higher levels of nutrition knowledge as compared to those that used firewood. The class of study was significantly associated with the nutrition knowledge level (p = 0.000). Class seven pupils were 8.34 times more likely to have higher nutrition knowledge as compared to class five and six pupils (OR = 8.34). Class five pupils 2.76 times less likely to have higher nutrition knowledge as compared to their class six and seven counterparts (OR = 2.76).

Conclusion and recommendations
The television should be explored more to deliver age-appropriate nutrition messages to learners. Proper source of lighting in households should be focused on as it could positively influence the knowledge of pupils in nutrition and other subjects. Facilitating families with solar lamps or installation of electrical energy at subsidized cost is recommended. Various healthy learning activities should be incorporated into the school environment to promote skills on nutrition and health.