

Hunger/Underweight and Violent Behaviour During Covid 19

Patricia Thompson
Jamaica Island Nutrition Network (JINN)

INTRODUCTION

Experience with breakfast feeding programmes at primary schools (NHP 2003)., drew attention to the relationship of irregular meals and violent temperament.. Survey data during covid (UNICEF 2020), revealed increase in food insecurity among low income homes, which probably means irregular meals. Anthropological data (Gayle, 2019) indicate a relationship between hunger, anger and violent behaviour especially in boys. Data from national security suggest a high likelihood of gang recruitment and violence in the 10-13 age group in certain inner-city areas.

AIM

To assess the nutritional status of school children during covid 19 and determine food security status relative to behavioural manifestations.

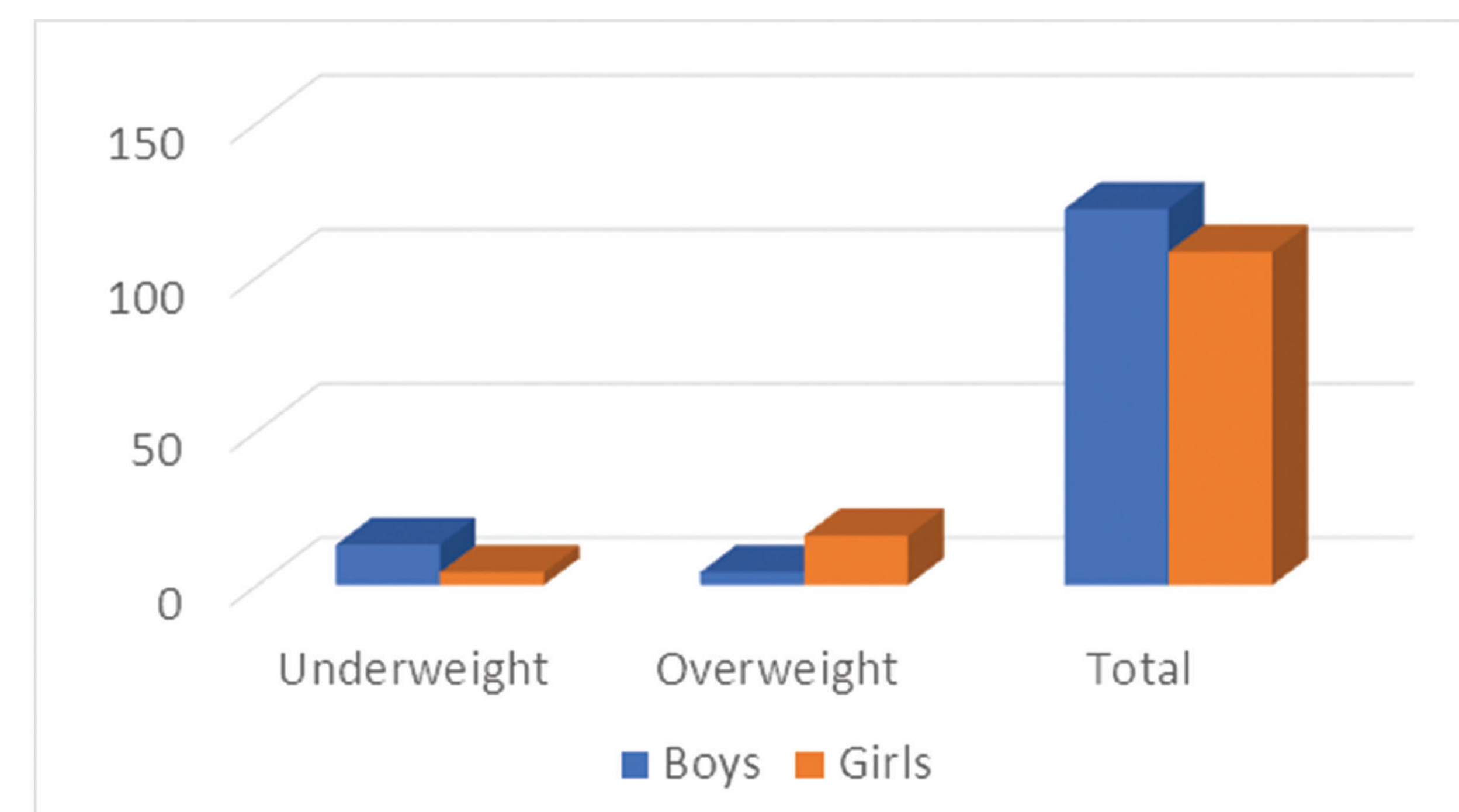
MATERIALS AND METHODS

Six inner city schools in Kingston provided a convenience sample of 231 students aged 11-13 years comprising 122 boys (52.8%) and 109 girls (47.2%). BMI was determined from weight and height measurements.

Food insecurity was assessed qualitatively through emailed questionnaires from camp coordinators and from parent interviews by telephone to determine student behaviour.

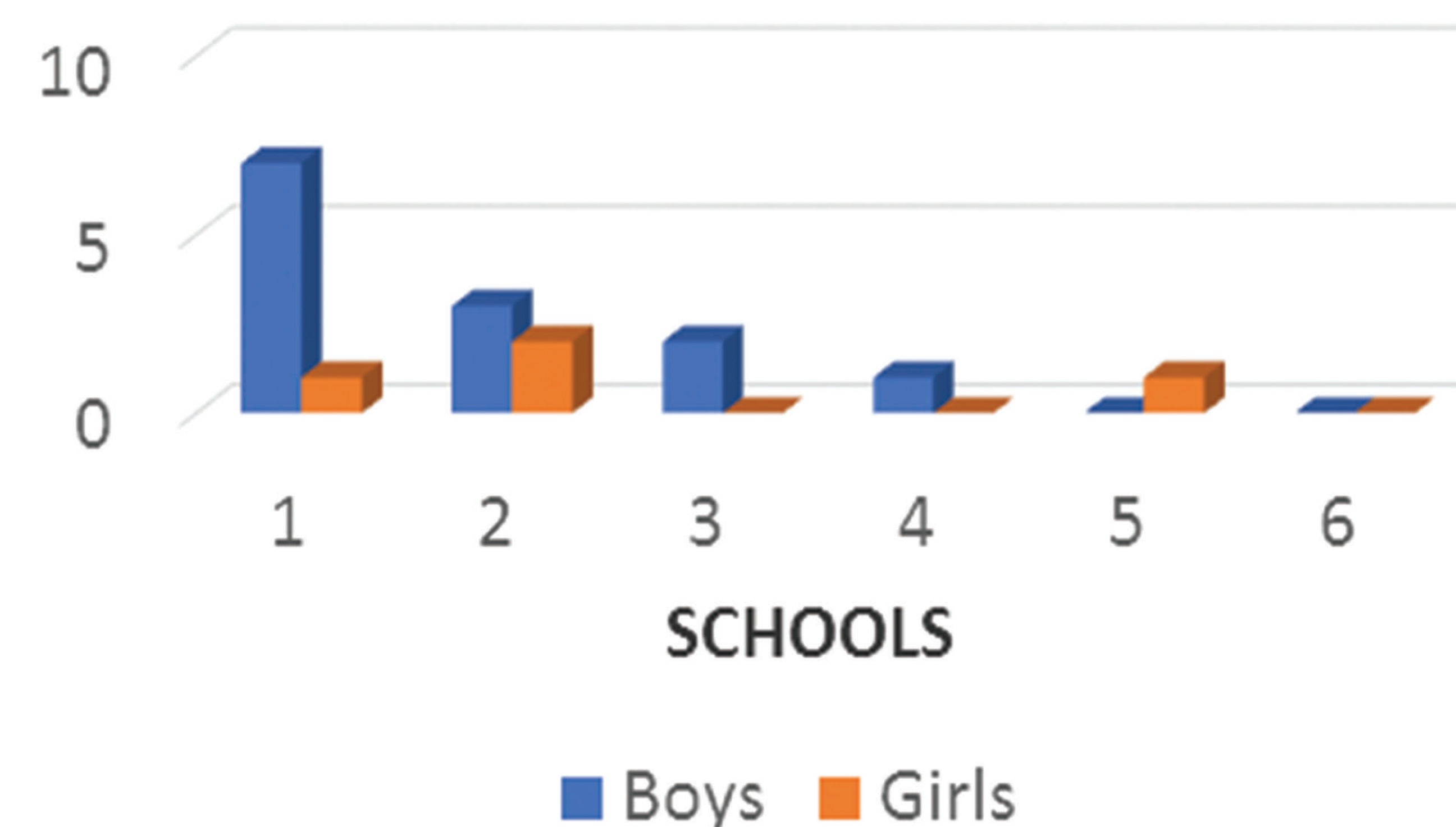


RESULTS



Sixteen percent (16%) of students was determined to be malnourished with underweight for height at 7.4% and overweight at 8.7%. Of the underweight, boys outnumbered girls by 3.5x but overweight girls outnumbered boys by 4x. There were variations in data by individual schools. Parent interviews further revealed the complexity of cultural practices relative to girls and boys in households.

UNDERWEIGHT AND OVERWEIGHT BY SCHOOL



CONCLUSIONS

Feeding strategies need better targeting from puberty based on sex as well as SES at both school and home. School food coordinators and parents should be educated on feeding children appropriately at different ages as a strategy towards mitigating the serious problems of obesity, underweight and violence in Jamaica.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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3. Interviews and data collation were conducted by Karissa Kee (student, Utech) and Nicole Adamson (JINN member)

LITERATURE CITED

1. Thompson, Patricia (2003-05) - Report submitted to the Ministry of Education on the New Horizons Project for primary schools
2. Allison Brown and Natasha Burnett - Report submitted to UNICEF, 2020 by CAPRI on Survey of households
3. Gayle, Herbert PhD - Presentation at JINN conference (2019) on Nutrition and Parenting - Focus on Violent Behaviour

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.jamaicanutrition.com

Instagram: @jaislandnutrition

Contact us at 876-977-4561 for more details and on follow up of study