The impact of COVID-19 on malnutrition

Standing Together for Nutrition (STfN)

Saskia Osendarp
Micronutrient Forum
Conceptual Framework on how COVID-19 impacts malnutrition

**ECONOMY**
- Incomes
- Food prices
- Migration
- Social Protection

**FOOD SYSTEM**
- Retail and markets
- Food supplies
- Food demand
- Premix supplies

**HEALTH SYSTEM**
- Health and nutrition services
- Health and nutrition supplies

**DIET QUALITY**
- Nutrition & food insecurity
- Access to nutritious foods
- Poverty and inequity
- Women’s empowerment

**ILLNESS**
- Coverage of nutrition-specific interventions
- Prevention and treatment of infections
- Hygiene

**COSTS TO SOCIETY**
- Mortality & Morbidity
  - NCDs
- Birth outcomes
- Productivity, earnings
- Human capital formation

ALL FORMS OF MALNUTRITION

Directional arrows indicate causality and interconnections between the frameworks.
Child malnutrition is strongly correlated with GDP per capita, while current projections predict an average 7.9% of GDP decline due to COVID19.
The availability of nutritious foods in particular is affected by COVID19 measures

• What are nutritious foods:
  • Animal source products
  • Fruits and vegetables

• Production of these foods is labour intensive and therefore more impacted by social distancing

• These foods are more susceptible to perishing and food waste when markets are disrupted

• These foods are more expensive and the first to be dropped from the household menu when incomes fall
The delivery of essential nutrition services is affected during COVID19, although countries are employing mitigation strategies to restore and increase services.

STfN is a unique collaboration that brings together experts from the fields of nutrition, food and health systems to work together to mitigate the damage of COVID-19 on malnutrition and build back better.
Standing Together for Nutrition Consortium

• Multi-disciplinary research consortium:
  • 55 coregroup members representing 35 organisations and covering the globe
  • Led by Saskia Osendarp (MNF) and Lawrence Haddad (GAIN)

• In response to COVID-19: tackling malnutrition is even more critical

• Lots of stakeholders involved: adopting an inclusive approach:
  • More than 590 signatories and counting from the research, program and implementation communities from all regions of the world committed to greater collaboration to strengthen data, models, and teams

• Aim: working to increase investment in and political commitment to nutrition, especially ahead of the Food Systems Summit and N4G

• Target audience: Donors, Decision-makers and Governments
Estimating the combined economic, food and health systems disruptions on malnutrition

- **MIRAGRODEP**: Covid-19 economic and food system disruption scenarios
- **LiST**: COVID-19 disruption scenarios in coverage of health and nutrition services
- **OPTIMA**: % of HH that cannot afford a healthy diet
  - Child Wasting
  - Child Stunting
  - Maternal anemia
  - Maternal BMI
  - Birth outcomes
- **Costs of inaction**: Optimized package of interventions
Two publications in The Lancet so far:

- Technical Commentary on wasting, authored by the STfN consortium
- Call to Action on the impact of COVID-19 on malnutrition, authored by the leaders of four UN Agencies (WFP, WHO, UNICEF, FAO)
COVID-19 could result in an additional 6.7 million children with wasting in 2020.
COVID-19 could result in around 130,000 additional deaths in children < 5 yrs in 2020

• Combined increase in wasting and a change in coverage of nutrition and health services (see Roberton et al., 2020) results in a significant number of additional deaths:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change in coverage of health and nutrition services</th>
<th>-15%</th>
<th>-25%</th>
<th>-50%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional deaths</td>
<td>111,193</td>
<td>128,605</td>
<td>178,510</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coverage in health and nutrition services includes: treatment of severe wasting, Vit A supplementation, promotion of improved young child feeding, provision of micronutrient supplements to pregnant women

• 80% of these deaths will be in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia
Without timely action, 6.7M additional children will become wasted in 2020 as a result of COVID-19.

Stunting, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight, and lives lost will also increase drastically without immediate investments.

THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW.

STANDING TOGETHER FOR NUTRITION

Join us at StandingTogetherForNutrition.org
The impact of COVID-19 is modelled for several diet and nutrition outcomes:

- Child stunting
- Child wasting (updated)
- Anemia during pregnancy
- Maternal low BMI
- % of population that cannot afford a healthy diet
- Child mortality

Using a pessimistic, moderate and optimistic scenario for 2020, 2021 and 2022 based on:

- Changes in GNI
- Changes in coverage of essential nutrition services

With costed recommendations on how to mitigate and build back better
A Call to Action by the leaders of the four UN Agencies: WFP, UNICEF, FAO and WHO.

A minimum of US$2.4 billion is needed for four live-saving interventions:

1. Prevention of wasting in children at risk
2. Treatment for wasted children
3. Biannual vit A supplementation for children aged 6-59 months
4. Mass campaigns for breastfeeding
Call to Action: Five other urgent actions to protect children’s right to nutrition in the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Safeguard and promote **access to nutritious, safe and affordable diets**

- Invest in **improving maternal and child nutrition** through pregnancy, infancy and early childhood

- **Re-active and scale up services** for the early detection and treatment of child wasting

- Maintain the **provision of nutritious and safe school meals** for vulnerable children

- **Expand social protection** to safeguard access to nutritious diets and essential services
Thank you

With special thanks to The Children's Investment Fund Foundation; without their generous support, this work could not have been possible.

“Standing Together for Nutrition represents a global coming together of experts who are deeply worried about the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on the nutrition status of the most vulnerable. Working together, using their databases, models, and vast field experience they have given us a clear picture of the horrifying consequences of the crisis if we fail to act and have given us clear recommendations on the actions needed to be taken immediately to avert this tragedy in the making.”

DR. LAWRENCE HADDAD
GAIN

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