

MAMI

Management of Acute Malnutrition in Infants (Improving the evidence underlying new WHO Malnutrition Guidelines)

Background:

Undernutrition is a major global public health problem responsible for 2.6 million deaths of the 5.9 million child deaths in 2015 i.e. nearly 45% of all under five child deaths. Despite CMAM protocol providing effective management of SAM and MAM in children aged 6-59 months, globally some 4 million severely wasted infants aged <6 months remain neglected including in Bangladesh.

Considering younger infants are at a greater health risk, the recent WHO Guideline for SAM Management for the first time recommends management of uncomplicated SAM infants <6m in the community. But there is not enough knowledge on how to implement the guideline to adopt it within the national policies.

Project Objectives:

The project has three specific objectives for setting a baseline for future programmes-

Objective 1: To estimate the prevalence of acute malnutrition amongst infants under 6 months of age in Sadar Upzila of Barisal district, Bangladesh - including any seasonal variations.

Objective 2: To identify risk factors associated with acute malnutrition in this young age group.

Objective 3: To describe outcomes under current models of care in a longitudinal cohort study in Barisal.

Geographical Coverage: Barisal Sadar Upazila, Barisal.

Project duration: July 2014 - November 2016

Funded by: Margaret A. Cargill Foundation (MAC Foundation)

Target Groups



Children <6 months



Parents/Caregivers



Community Members



Service Providers



MOH & Global Stakeholders

Major Achievements:

- Conducted two cross sectional surveys to estimate the prevalence of acute malnutrition among infants <6months during pre and post-harvest season in a semi-urban setting of Barisal.
- Conducted longitudinal cohort study among infants <6 months to identify risk factors and outcome of severe acute malnutrition under current national standard of care.
- Conducted qualitative study to identify perception of the community regarding severe acute malnutrition and its' management among young infants in Barisal.
- Completed drafting two research paper from the cohort and qualitative study targeting international journals for peer-reviewed publications.
- Involved national & international experts and key policy influential stakeholders across the globe as in-country and global technical advisors for advocating MAMI.
- Submitted and presented couple of abstracts from the research at various international conferences.
- Jointly with ENN and LSHTM experts developed C-MAMI (Community MAMI) tool for designing future intervention to manage acute malnutrition in infants <6m in the community.

Major Challenges:

- Arranging IRB approval for the planned research and further addendum on time was the major challenge so far due to time-bound research implementation plan.
- Analysis of large datasets and compete multiple research papers in time for submission to peer-reviewed journals was another challenge.
- On-going controversies among nutrition communities in Bangladesh related to management of SAM in children under 5 years has created another challenge to discuss on this issue even among infants <6 months of age.

Future Direction:

- Piloting C-MAMI tool in multiple settings to test its feasibility, effective early detection and management of nutritionally vulnerable infants <6m in a community-based setting.
- Explore use of different indicators of nutritional vulnerability using large DHS datasets. This will also enable us to assess the strength of association between weight-for-age vs weight-for-length in infants and establish which is more strongly associated with biologically plausible risk factors (e.g. poor breastfeeding). This data will further inform case definition decisions and potentially improve case screening in community settings.

“My baby was seen by the NGO health workers last month, and found that she is malnourished when they measured her weight, length etc. They said I need to visit hospital along with my baby and stay there for at least weeks. There is nowhere I can go around the village for weighing my baby after they left. I can't go to the hospital in town for such a long time.”

Nazma Begum, Dharmadi village, Roypasha Korapur union of Barisal Sadar upazila, Barisal

