Understanding children who are both wasted and stunted: What we know from exploring existing data

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The Wasting and stunting Technical Working Group
Why this project?

Is this justified?
Wasting and Stunting (WaSt) project

i. Technical Interest Group
ii. Review of evidence - Technical Briefing Paper
iii. Research prioritisation
iv. Mining of existing data
v. Publication & Influencing
Technical Interest group

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You may see some names you recognise
Review of evidence: Why is concurrence important?

Children wasted, stunted and underweight (multiple deficits) conveys similar risk of death to severe wasting.

(McDonald, Olofin et al. 2013)
Review of evidence: Waterlow’s action diagram

Waterlow childhood malnutrition as a public health problem (BMJ 1974; 4: 88-90)

Children who are both wasted and stunted are a priority

No clear evidence base for the current prioritization criteria
Mining of existing data: Questions

• Prevalence – How many children are affected?

• Who is most affected – Age and sex patterns?

• How best can they be identified – Which anthropometric measures best identifies WaSt in children?

• Concurrence and its association with mortality – How does underweight interact with WaSt?
What is the prevalence of concurrence?

- Ranging from 0% to 8%
- 9 countries >5%
- Pooled prevalence 3.0% (95% CI 2.97 to 3.06)
- Burden ~ 6 million children (6-59m)

Concurrence to be routinely reported

Are these children being reached?

Khara et al; 2017
Who is most affected by concurrence?


- 51 countries
- 1.8 million children
- More likely younger and more likely boys

Myatt et al; 2018
Relationship between WaSt and underweight?


All children who are wasted and stunted are also underweight and have a high risk of death: a descriptive epidemiology of multiple anthropometric deficits using data from 51 countries

Multiple anthropometric deficit category is the same as WaSt.

Myatt et al; 2018
How do we best identify concurrent children?

Niakhar (Senegal) 1980

- 5,751 children
- WAZ<-2.8 identifies all deaths associated with WHZ and WaSt
- MUAC < 115 adds 2 deaths. WHZ did not add value
- Retain MUAC replace WHZ with WAZ

Myatt et al; 2018
What do we know so far?

• Prevalence of concurrence wasting and stunting varies but can reach alarming levels of >5% (*Khara et al; 2017*).

• Children who are wasted and stunted are also underweight and at a high risk of mortality (*McDonald et al; 2013*).

• WAZ <-2.8 detects all deaths associated with WaSt. MUAC<115cm adds to this value while WHZ does not (*Myatt et al; 2018*).
Recommendations

Research to adopt including concurrence as a category of analysis (prevalence, risk factors, mortality)

Explore anthropometry and other methods to understand the relationship between stunting and wasting and the functional implications.

Mortality targeted programme to consider using combined WAZ and MUAC improve identification of high risk children including WaSt
THANK YOU!