

Develop and Standardize Tool (Questionnaire) to Assess the Malnutrition in Children: A Systematic Review



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Abstract

Malnutrition is like an iceberg, most children in the developing countries live under the burden of malnutrition. Malnutrition can be defined as 'Inadequate nutrition caused by the lack of a balanced diet or by disorders of the digestive system in which the nutrients from food cannot be absorbed properly. Recent data from the WHO, had reported that about 60% of all deaths, occurring among children aged less than five years in developing countries, could be attributed to malnutrition. It has been estimated that nearly 50.6 million under five children were malnourished and almost 90% of these children were from developing countries. Preschool children are most vulnerable of the effect of malnutrition and their nutritional status is considered to be a sensitive indicator of community health. **Objectives:** To synthesize the relevant and published literature on malnutrition in children. **Methodology:** A systematic literature search was performed to identify all relevant articles to the research questions. The bibliographic databases, Pub Med, EMBASE and CINAHL were searched from 2009 until 2014. **Results:** The search yielded 50 references. Screening of these titles, full text review and abstracts retrieved by search, 10 articles were excluded. Ten studies were subsequently omitted because of duplicity. 30 studies were screened to meet inclusion criteria. 15 studies were excluded as they did not fall under inclusion criteria. A total of 20 studies were included for systematic review. **Discussion and Conclusion:** The burden of malnutrition is very high. This systematic review implies that further consideration regarding prevalence of malnutrition is required. Further Evidence based research is needed to promote health of children. Significantly higher prevalence of under-nutrition was noted among under-five children in rural and urban population in India. This calls for educating mothers and other caretakers in the family regarding increased nutritional requirements with increasing age, strengthening Public Distribution System. There is a need to prepare assessment tool to assess the malnutrition in children.

Keywords: Malnutrition, Children, Anganwadi, Stunting, Underweight, Wasting

Background

In spite of its remarkable economic growth in the past decade, India's progress in reducing child malnutrition has been unacceptably slow. The prevalence of child malnutrition in India deviates further from the expected level at the country's per capita income than in any other large developing country. With close to half of its preschoolers suffering from malnutrition, India is one of the countries with the highest proportion of malnourished children in the world, along with Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Nepal. India's rates are an almost double as compared to those of Sub-Saharan Africa and five times

higher than those of China. India is home to 40 percent of the world's malnourished children and 35 percent of the developing world's low-birth weight infants; every year, 2.5 million children die in India, accounting for one in five deaths in the world. More than half of these deaths could be prevented if children were well nourished. (IFPRI 2008)¹

Malnutrition constitutes 22% of the country's disease burden because it severely weakens a child's immune system, raising their mortality rates from common diseases such as pneumonia, malaria, measles and diarrhoea. Children with SAM have extremely high mortality rates between 20-30% - a rate of death

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