Sponsored symposium: Prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition: current knowledge and challenges for effective interventions to achieve the global target 2025 on reducing wasting in children

Punta Cana, Dominican Republic,
XVIII Latin American Congress of Nutrition
11 November 2015, 08:00 – 09:30
Room: Gran Salón Bávaro 2, 3 y 4

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

It is estimated that 51 million children under-five years are wasted in the world at any point in time, with 17 million estimated to be severely wasted, based on national level prevalence data. The majority of wasted children live outside of the humanitarian context, which is more commonly associated with high levels of wasting and where treatment programmes have traditionally focussed. It is estimated that globally only around 14% of wasted children are currently being reached by treatment services. These statistics are of serious global concern given the well-established link between wasting and mortality. In the WHO Region of the Americas, Guyana and Haiti have national wasting rates of slightly above 5%. However, in several countries in this region there are pockets of wasting in the urban and rural poor that need to be addressed in order to also tackle the problem of stunting, since reoccurring wasting can lead to stunting.

While the treatment of severe wasting is a well-established intervention and WHO has published a recent guideline on the update of the evidence, integrating it into essential health packages at national level has proven to be challenging. This is partly due to existing weaknesses in health systems and challenges with securing sufficient long-term funding to adequately scale up the service to national level. The treatment of moderate wasting is more challenging due to a lack of clear treatment guidelines given the context-specific nature of the solutions. Progress to achieve the global target on wasting will depend not only on the scale up of evidence-informed interventions to treat wasting but also on the strength and effectiveness of prevention strategies.

Participants attending the symposium will be given the chance to discuss technical and operational considerations on how to improve the treatment and prevention of acute malnutrition in children.

Presentations

Four presentations (10-15 minutes each) followed by an open discussion where participants will provide insights, questions, comments and critiques to the presentations as well as put forward issues that can take contribute to the discussion in the future. The presentations will include the following topics:

- Prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition: Update on WHO guidelines (Juan Pablo Peña-Rosas - WHO)
- Managing malnutrition in stable situations – integration in services (Amador Gomez – ACF Spain)
- Building systematic capacity – challenges in pre-service training (Michelle Monroy – Guatemala)
- Managing malnutrition in humanitarian emergencies – case example Haiti (Joseline Marhone – Haiti)

Session chair: Professor Alan Jackson, Southampton General Hospital (MP 113), United Kingdom