



UN Communique on simplified approaches for the treatment of child wasting

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WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP Technical meeting on simplified treatment protocols for management of wasting, 26-27 March 2019

Objectives of meeting:

1. To review consolidated evidence and information on published and unpublished research on the simplified treatment protocols;
2. To identify key questions (gaps in knowledge) around efficacy, effectiveness, and safety of the simplified protocol approach;
3. To define gaps in research that would be required to be filled for development of comprehensive guidelines;
4. To have a clear plan of action on way forward in terms of development of WHO normative guidelines on the simplified treatment protocols;
5. Define under what conditions their introduction can be supported.

Questions

- What is the effect on targeting of using MUAC only versus MUAC and WHZ as outlined in the 2013 WHO Guideline Updates on the management of SAM (i.e. how many high-risk children might be missed if MUAC is the only identification criteria)?
- What is the effect on key outcomes of using a dosing regimen based on status (SAM or MAM) and not body weight for children identified with SAM?
- Is there a differential effect of using RUTF vs RUSF on children either identified with SAM or those identified with MAM?
- What definitions of recovery are being used for SAM and for MAM?

Other operational questions

- What is the effect on length of stay in programme of this dosage provided compared to dosing based on body weight in children identified with SAM?
- Does this protocol result in increased programming efficiencies that would be expected to result in improved cost-effectiveness per child treated for SAM and for MAM?
- Does this protocol result in increased coverage of SAM and MAM children?
- What is the impact of this protocol on relapse or other longer-term outcomes compared to the WHO guidance?

Key overall question for WHO guidance update:

- What is the effectiveness and safety of individual interventions for the management of wasting and of a full package of care required to achieve nutritional and functional recovery in different settings?

Key conclusions of meeting on simplified treatment protocols

- Simplifications varied across screening, admission and discharge criteria, as well as provision of specialized nutritious food (location and frequency, and amount and type)
- Findings limited in scope and context specific, and relatively small scale – ultimate impact on population-based outcomes and cost are not yet known
- Support simplified approaches in exceptional circumstances where warranted; monitoring needs to be conducted and reported on (e.g. recovery, mortality, relapse)
- No change in global recommendations

Next steps

UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO under their respective mandates will:

1. Support national coordination platforms to lead the use and documentation of simplified approaches in exceptional circumstances, where warranted.
2. Continue to support and encourage further opportunities for evidence generation for the management of children with wasting.
3. Prioritize and stimulate the generation of evidence necessary to develop updated comprehensive normative guidelines on wasting in all settings.
4. Develop updated, comprehensive guidelines on wasting.
5. Present a UN Global Action Plan on Wasting framing wasting in the broader context of reaching the SDGs and aligning priorities and agendas across all global partners.