

Short communication

Recouping maternal and child nutrition: Mitigation strategies in COVID-19 pandemic

ABSTRACT

The global health and economy continues to devastate because of COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic has a huge impact on access to appropriate nutritive foods, essential interventions and poverty. There arises a significant concern that the COVID – 19 pandemic and its repercussions have had a bad impact on the women and children's nutritional status and this could worsen over the time. There are 149 million children under 5 years of age who are stunted according to the current estimates. Now COVID-19 threatens to reverse or halt further more. The effects on the linear growth in children and stunting could be more than the short-term effects of under nutrition if left unaddressed. Prioritizing nutrition for vulnerable children and women is of prime importance. Re-strategizing and reprioritizing investments for the COVID-19 era should be together done by the development partners, donors and governments using data-driven decision making.

Keywords: COVID- 19; Maternity; child nutrition.

Introduction:

The unexpected COVID-19 pandemic due to SARS CoV2 virus continues to devastate the global health and economy. And it is creating a huge impact on essential interventions coverage, poverty and access to appropriate nutritive foods. The rates of childhood wasting, child undernutrition and maternal undernutrition likely to increase as a consequence of this pandemic COVID 19 although these were in rising trends already. Hence this public health issue should be addressed promptly. There could be poor management of key risk factors such as physical inactivity, unhealthy diets, and health as a whole¹ because of COVID-19 response measures such as social distancing, lockdowns, self-isolation, restricted access to preventive care in primary care settings [4,5]. There is a huge concern that the COVID-19 responses have had a negative impact on the nutritional status of children and women and this could get worsen in due course of time. The prevalence of wasting could increase by 10-50% with an excess of approximately forty thousand to twenty lakhs child deaths² which was suggested by current modelling exercise that included various estimates of impact of COVID-19 related economic downfall, food insecurity and halting of programs related to community based malnutrition detection and management. Recent statistics indicate that 149 million children under the age of five are stunted, it is reduced from 2012 statistics which was 166 million but still a long way to achieve global³. COVID-19 threatens to reverse or halt the scenario further more. The effects on the linear growth in children and stunting could be more than the short-term effects of under nutrition if left unaddressed.

WAY FORWARD

We suggest that to prevent the exacerbation of child and maternal under nutrition these approaches can be made, proper food insecurity interventions, social protection programs, healthy and safe community/household environments, access to health care, educational programs to all the people. Re-strategizing and reprioritizing investments for the COVID-19 era should be together done by the development partners, donors and governments using data-driven decision making.

CONCLUSION

There is going to be a slow transition and the new normal is going to be very different from the past for which the countries should equip themselves. Prioritizing nutrition for vulnerable children and women is of prime importance. Re-strategizing and reprioritizing investments for the COVID-19 era using data-driven decision making should be together done by donors, governments and development partners.

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