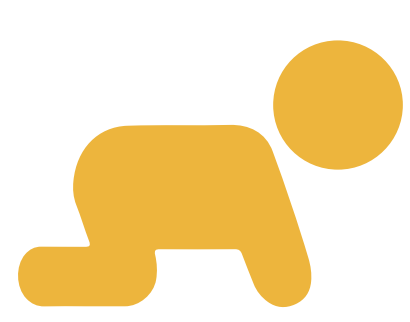




# ACUTE MALNUTRITION IN INFANTS AGED UNDER 6 MONTHS

## BACKGROUND



An estimated **8.5 MILLION** babies under six months of age are wasted (too thin) worldwide.



The UN Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) aims to **end all forms of malnutrition by 2030**.

## METHODS

We examined infant, maternal, and household factors associated with wasting amongst **16,123 infants** under six months from **20 countries** where malnutrition is common.



## RISK FACTORS

We found many factors associated with infant wasting:

- Poverty
- Maternal malnutrition
- Low birth weight
- Delayed breastfeeding at birth
- Recent diarrhoea
- Disempowerment of mothers (e.g. experiences violence, does not access antenatal care).

## PROTECTIVE FACTORS

We found that infants were less likely to be wasted where:

- The mother was educated or in work
- The infant was exclusively breastfed (receives nothing except breastmilk)
- The infant was breastfed, even if not exclusively.



## CONCLUSION

**This study observes that to address infant malnutrition, supporting breastfeeding is of key importance but may not alone be sufficient – many other factors play a role.** It also shows that addressing the needs of malnourished infants must always consider the mental, physical and nutritional well-being of pregnant women and mothers.

**It is important to consider these multiple factors in designing future research and when planning strategies and programme packages of care.** Programmes of support needs to involve many sectors (such as water, sanitation and hygiene; mental health; social support services) not just nutrition and health and intervene early with pregnant women, mothers and infants.