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Poshan Power: Combating Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) for improved nutrition outcomes



Source: Global Health Strategies

Dear colleagues,

There is a strong and direct relationship between undernutrition and the disease caused by infectious organisms. It is a vicious cycle where malnutrition makes a person more susceptible to infection, and infection contributes to malnutrition. Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) are a formidable group of 20 conditions that are mainly prevalent in tropical areas and affect nearly 1.7 billion people worldwide. NTDs such as Soil Transmitted Helminthiasis (STH), Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) and Visceral Leishmaniasis (VL) are common in India and have been proven to be silent killers— not just through their mortality rates, but also through their debilitating impact on the victim's health and nutrition status, abilities to receive proper education and earn a respectable livelihood. 1 in 5 children in developing countries is underweight and NTDs only serve to exacerbate the risks of malnourishment, particularly in marginalised communities. Thus, the fight against NTDs is also important for child nutrition, growth, and development.

Mass Drug Administration (MDA) has been acknowledged as one of the most effective ways to address NTDs. Apart from preventing NTDs, MDA drugs also have additional benefits such as deworming which increases nutrition uptake in children and helps in their physical and cognitive development. Studies have shown that children who were dewormed at an early age gained more weight, grew taller, displayed improved appetite, and even showed improved motor and language development skills. Deworming has also demonstrated remarkable results in adults, especially in women of child-bearing age and pregnant women.

The fight against NTDs would contribute significantly to improving nutrition outcomes,

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Bi-annual, Pan-India Mass Drug Administration (MDA) Campaign by the Government of India in mission mode along with National Deworming Day– with the objective to bring unprecedented focus and mass visibility towards improving community compliance to drugs preventing NTDs. It emphasizes the importance of nutrition and deworming towards preventing and treating NTDs that lead to perpetual cycle of malnutrition and poverty. Since, NTDs and malnutrition are intrinsically linked and as India gears up to completely eliminate NTDs such as Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) by 2030, the timing is apposite to resonate this aim with the Sustainable Development Goal 2 which envisages to end all forms of hunger and malnutrition, also by the year 2030.

Some relevant materials on addressing NTDs, LF and deworming practices in India are available in the resources section. We hope this serves to inform the nutrition community on working to address all causes of malnutrition towards improved well-being for women and children.

Kind Regards,
Arjan De Wagt,
Chief, Nutrition Programme | UNICEF India

Resources

- [World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day \(NTD\) Day Nutrition toolkit](#)
- [Lymphatic Filariasis \(LF\) Factsheet 2023](#)
- [Government of India PIB Press Release on the Launch of Bi-Annual Mass Drug Administration](#)

Nutrition in the news

Date	News	Source
04/02/2023	How history and geography shape the way we eat	Times of India
04/02/2023	Experts laud Karnataka panel recommendation of 5 eggs a week for malnourished children	The South First
03/02/2023	Why Sitharaman called millets 'Shree Anna' - the mother of all grains	Business Standard
03/02/2023	Anganwadi demands will be met in phased manner, says minister	New Indian Express
02/02/2023	Neglected Tropical Diseases: Prevalence Of Kala Azar Infection In Uttar Pradesh's Deoria	Swachh India

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01/02/2023	Budget 2023: Government Aims To Establish A Global Hub For Millets, 'Shree Anna'	Swachh India
01/02/2023	Budget: Centre aims to eliminate sickle cell anemia by 2047	The Print
31/01/2023	FSSAI to Draft Rules for Front-of Pack Nutrition Labelling (FOPL) of Packaged Foods	Krishi Jagran
31/01/2023	Economic Survey lauds Modi gov't's Aspirational Districts Programme — 'good governance' template	The Print
31/01/2023	Dishes made of millets now on Parliament canteens' menu	The Print
30/01/2023	Budget 2023: Thinking beyond free grains	Money Control
30/01/2023	Modi praises state's 'millet entrepreneurs'	Times of India
30/01/2023	Soaring rice price shows food inflation still stalking the world	Economic Times
29/01/2023	Fourth agriculture road map to focus on farming of millets across Bihar	Times of India
27/01/2023	Millets in PDS a game changer for combating malnutrition, climate change	Down to Earth

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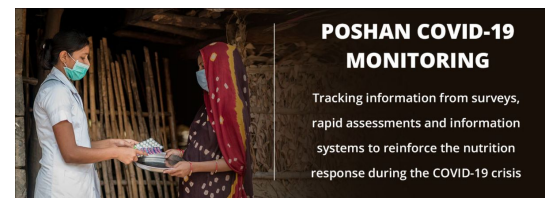
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