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Topic: Malnutrition treatment and prevention

Title: An analysis of common factors in deaths of children under 5 years old admitted with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) in KZN, South

Presentation Type: Oral

INTRODUCTION: The UNICEF Conceptual Framework of Malnutrition describes the basic, underlying and immediate causes of malnutrition. With urbanisation and advancements in treatment of HIV/AIDS and TB, the objective was to ascertain the common factors in deaths of children admitted with SAM.

MATERIALS and METHODS: A cross sectional comparative study of the common factors in deaths of children under 5 admitted with SAM in paediatric wards was conducted. A standardized questionnaire was designed to capture common factors amongst the deaths of children under 5 admitted with SAM between April and December 2015. All facilities (n = 52) admitting children with SAM were targeted.

RESULTS: There was a response rate of 75% (n = 39) facilities. A review of 229 deaths was conducted. The highest percentage (69%, n=158) of deaths were related to sepsis, pneumonia or diarrhoea. This was closely followed by poor infant and young child feeding (48%, n=112), and (40%, n=90) were HIV positive. Of the HIV+ children 56% were initiated late/defaulted/not on ART. The least common factors were TB infection (16%, n=33) and herbal intoxication (8%, n=17).

CONCLUSIONS: Diarrhoea still plays a significant role in child morbidity and mortality with most deaths related to sepsis, pneumonia or diarrhoea. Poor infant feeding which is also linked to diarrhoea is another main factor contributing to SAM and death in children <2 years old.