

Author: Elizabeth Kristjansson

Co Author: Selma Liberato (Menzies University, Australia), Vivian Welch (Bruyere Research Institute, University of Ottawa)

Topic: Community health and nutrition programs

Title: Are school feeding programmes children effective for improving physical health, educational performance and cognitive performance? Why? Under what circumstances? For whom?

Presentation Type: Oral

Background: School Feeding programs are receiving increased attention due to potential for achieving 'improvements in education and nutrition for children.' The goals of school feeding programs are to: encourage children to come to school, encourage students to stay in school longer and to enhance educational achievement. But does school feeding meet these goals? For whom? What aspects of delivery are key to effectiveness? Our updated systematic review on school feeding will help address this.

Objectives:1) To understand whether school feeding (SF) programs are effective in improving physical health, cognition and educational outcomes for children worldwide.2) To identify factors in context and delivery of SF programs that impact on effectiveness.

3) To understand implications for health equity.

Methods

Our Cochrane/Campbell review involves an interdisciplinary group based in Canada and Australia. Our review includes experimental and quasi-experimental studies. We searched published and grey literature with an information specialist. To reduce bias, two reviewers reviewed titles and abstracts, assessed full text of retrieved studies for inclusion/exclusion, data extraction and analysis. In addition to capturing study quality and outcome analysis, we conducted a process evaluation, including %RDI for energy, classroom quality, supervision, substitution and other factors. We performed subgroup analyses by age, sex and nutritional status in order to determine whom school meals work best for.

Results: Thus far, we identified 25 included studies; fifteen from LMIC; ten from HIC.