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Title: Improving Complementary Feeding during the Lean Season: Results from a Trials of Improved Practices Study in the Mchinji District, Malawi

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The seasonality-nutrition scenario, where food stocks run low, food prices increase and food consumption decreases, poses major food and nutrition security challenges in rural Malawi. The period from October through March, known as the “lean season”, has negative impacts on the quality, diversity and frequency of meals, with particular consequence on complementary feeding of young children 6-23 months of age. Concern Worldwide is conducting a Trials of Improved Practices (TIPs) study to identify and promote key complementary feeding practices that are both effective and feasible to perform during this period when household resources are most constrained.

This study is being conducted in the Mchinji District, located in the Central Region of Malawi, and employs consultative formative research methods to collect qualitative data on complementary feeding practices from mothers of young children 6-23 months of age. Data are collected through a series of three household visits over a 15-day period. The first visit assesses household food availability and identifies current complementary feeding practices. The second visit counsels and negotiates one to two improved feeding practices for trialling over a 10-day period. The third visit evaluates and records the results from the trial period. A total of 36 households from two Traditional Authorities (TAs) are participating in the study.

Results from the study will be available in mid-April 2016 and will be submitted for review as soon as available. Findings will be used to craft targeted, locally adapted strategies to promote effective and feasible complementary feeding practices during the lean season.