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Topic: Malnutrition treatment and prevention

Title: Improving strategies for inpatient management of severe acute malnutrition and medical complications in children: a new WHO medical module distributed in South Sudan as innovative WHO Emergency Response on Nutrition.

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In South Sudan (SSD) in 2016, the estimated caseload of children less than 5 years of age with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) exceeds the number of 230,000. Children with SAM and medical complications (MC) should be treated as inpatients in stabilization centers (SC). However, the fragile health system of SSD, the lack of basic medical supplies in combination with mass displacement, hinders the capacity to treat SAM/MC timely and effectively. Due to the critical situation, prone to deteriorate without humanitarian assistance, WHO Country Office (WCO) intensified Emergency Response on Nutrition by supporting the inpatient care of SAM/MC, a challenging component of the community-based management of acute malnutrition in SSD.

In 2015 WHO HQ developed an emergency medical kit to manage SAM/MC children: a unique opportunity for WCO South Sudan to increase effectiveness and sustainability of life-saving nutrition interventions. The kit content was approved by experts; it was then, for the first time globally, introduced in SSD in April 2016 and it is now available on the WHO catalogue.

The kit ensures delivery of standard set of medicines for SAM/MC, made available through agile procurement of pre-packed supplies, ready to be quickly dispatched as part of WCO Emergency Nutrition strategy, which includes capacity development, supply management and monitoring. The provision of kits complements the collective Nutrition Cluster response in SSD, largely focused on outpatient and preventive care.

The innovative strategy ensures quality, life-saving treatment for SAM/MC in children, providing relief for hospital stock of medicines, not expressly managed for malnourished children.