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Topic: Malnutrition treatment and prevention

Title: Severe Malnutrition treatment and prevention in South African context

Presentation Type: Oral

Background: Severe malnutrition has been one of the most common causes of morbidity and mortality among children under the age of five years worldwide. According to Saving Children Report of 2005, over 60% children who died in South Africa were underweight and more than half severely malnourished. The high mortality was related to the high rate of children exposed to HIV-infection. Many children with severe malnutrition die at home without care, but even when hospital care is provided, case fatality rates may be high. Appropriate case management in health facilities, referral system and follow-up care, could save lives of many children.

Discussion: In 2012, protocols to managing severe acute malnutrition were approved and adopted by all the nine provinces. Mortality rates have been on the decline over the years but it may not be enough if all the parameters are not addressed.

The Essential Drug List, 2014 has also adopted the treatment guidelines with some deviation from the generic WHO recommendations. The Triennial report published, 2015 has reflected that case fatality rates of in-hospital severe acute malnutrition cases has been the lowest in 2013, at 11.7% compared to 2010 when it was 17.8% nationally. The Triennial report published in 2015 has reflected that case fatality rates of in-hospital severe acute malnutrition cases has been the lowest in 2013, at 11.7% compared to 2010 at 17.8% nationally.

Conclusion: It is clear that the implementation even though it is based on WHO recommendations with deviations has an impact and reduces mortality.