

Fact sheet on implementation of 2006 WHO Child Growth Standards

The IASC Global Nutrition Cluster and Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN) Task Force on Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation have recently released a fact sheet on the implementation of 2006 WHO Child Growth Standards for emergency nutrition programmes for children aged 6-59 months.

The fact sheet aims at providing a standard framework and guidance on transitioning from the 1977 National Centre for Health Statistics/WHO growth reference (NCHS reference) to the 2006 WHO Child Growth Standards (WHO standards) for emergency nutrition surveys and new and existing emergency nutrition programmes for the management of acute malnutrition.

The fact sheet is aimed at users of the new WHO standards for emergency nutrition programmes and at policy makers, from donors, to Governments, UN agencies and NGOs. It attempts to answer the most common questions that may arise during the transition process. These include:

- How do WHO standards affect prevalence of acute malnutrition and number of children eligible for selective feeding programmes?
- How does the use of WHO standards affect outcomes of acutely malnourished children?
- What are the resource implications of the transition?
- How to use the WHO standards for calculating and reporting prevalence of acute malnutrition?
- Which cut-offs should be used for admission/ discharge into nutrition programmes?
- Which types of software are available to be used with the WHO standards?

More detailed information can be found at the WHO website <http://www.who.int/childgrowth>

Background reports to the development of the fact sheet are at <http://ocha.unog.ch/humanitarianreform/Default.aspx?tabid=74>

The fact sheet is available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic at <http://www.humanitarianreform.org> click on 'Nutrition'

Note: The fact sheet does not address the programming implications that transitioning to the WHO standards will have for infants under six months of age, since investigations to date have focused on the 6-59 month age group. However infants under six months are the primary concern of the Management of Acute Malnutrition in Infants (MAMI) Project, which has included an investigation into the effects of the transition on this age-group.

The MAMI Report is due out in July 2009 and should help fill this current gap in understanding. In the meantime, programmers should be alert to and document admission of infants under six months to their programmes. Contrary to the expectations of many, use of the WHO Standards is expected to lead to large increases in the estimated prevalence of malnutrition in young infants (Eds).



AC/S. Hauenstein Swan

Taken from Field Exchange Issue 36, July 2009

<http://fex.ennonline.net/36/factsheet.aspx>
