Nutrition as a foundation for good health and development: the role of effective implementation and health systems

Purnima Menon, PhD

Senior Research Fellow & Theme Leader for South Asia Nutrition Programs
Poverty, Health and Nutrition Division & South Asia Office, IFPRI
Whichever way you look at the world...

...malnutrition affects every country

www.globalnutritionreport.org
45% of all child deaths from poor nutrition
Nutrition investments in the first 1000 Days are for life

Investments in First 1,000 Days Have GREATEST IMPACT

First 1,000 days is tipping point for:
- Childhood disease
- Chronic disease
- Cognitive deficits
- Economic losses


Credit: Meera Shekar, World Bank
What can leaders do for nutrition?

Deliver at scale a set of proven solutions to address immediate causes of poor nutrition in the first 1000 days of life.

Improve underlying conditions for nutrition through social equity-focused programs and inclusive economic growth.

Build and strengthen leadership and accountability for nutrition at all levels.
Extraordinary things can happen

Maharashtra

stunting fell from 37% to 24% in 7 years

Economic Growth
Poverty reduction

Nutrition and Health Missions
Improved Program Performance

Frontline nutrition staff recruited
Nutrition spending

www.globalnutritionreport.org
Delivering for nutrition in the first 1000 days: key interventions for health systems/programs*

**Pre-pregnancy and pregnancy**
- IFA supplementation and deworming.
- Consumption of iodized salt.
- Calcium supplementation where needed.
- Adequate food and nutrient intake during pregnancy.

**Newborn**
- Delayed cord clamping.
- Counseling and support at birth for early breastfeeding.
- Special care for low-birth-weight infants.

**1-6 months**
- Counseling for exclusive breastfeeding.
- Support for EBF through policies.
- Nutritional support to breastfeeding mothers.

**6-24 months**
- Counseling for age-appropriate IYCF.
- Special nutritional support/food supplements to 6-24 mo.

**Through entire period**: Behavior change communication on hygiene and sanitation.

**Birth to five years**: Routine immunization; Screening and care for severe acute malnutrition.

**6 months to five years**
Vitamin A; deworming IFA, as needed; ORS, zinc.

*Nutrition services often provided through same delivery platforms as health.
What can health leaders do to make health systems more nutrition-sensitive?

• **Acknowledge** contribution of nutrition to health system goals

• **Integrate** specific nutrition interventions into relevant health delivery platforms, especially for the first 1000 days

• **Monitor** nutrition interventions alongside routine health interventions

Examples of health systems taking on nutrition:

• National Nutrition Services in Bangladesh
• National Rural Health Mission in India
• Health Extension Program in Ethiopia
• Health system in Vietnam
Quality of nutrition services during antenatal care in Bangladesh: *Insights from an operational assessment in facilities*

**Take-away:** Closing gaps in nutrition counseling during existing antenatal care visits could strengthen nutrition actions

Saha et al., 2015
Delivering nutrition interventions across continuum of care: An example from Odisha, India

Take-away: Closing gaps in counseling during existing home visits can strengthen ome-based counseling by health workers

Avula et al., forthcoming
Delivering home-based counseling via outreach services in Ethiopia: Home visits by health extension workers among mothers with children <2y

Take-away: Closing gaps in reach of home visits needs to be a first step in delivering home-based counseling in Ethiopia.

Kim et al., 2015
Financing for nutrition: a critical consideration for effective implementation

2010: World Bank-led work on *Scaling Up Nutrition: What Will it Cost?* → 10 billion dollars of additional financing for nutrition

Ongoing: Costing and Financing for WHA Targets for Nutrition; other costing studies.

*Overall goal is to support country-specific costing and financing plans linked to achieving nutrition targets*
In closing: What can ministries of health do for nutrition?

• **Commit** to addressing nutrition explicitly to achieve health sector goals

• **Measure** and **monitor** delivery of nutrition interventions as part of health systems

• Include **financing for nutrition** as part of financing for health

• **Lead** laterally/manage up – bringing attention to social determinants of nutrition and health