



Impact Of Specialized Nutritious Foods And Social Behaviour Change Communication Interventions To Improve Infant And Young Children's Practices In Shuhada And Shari Buzurg Districts

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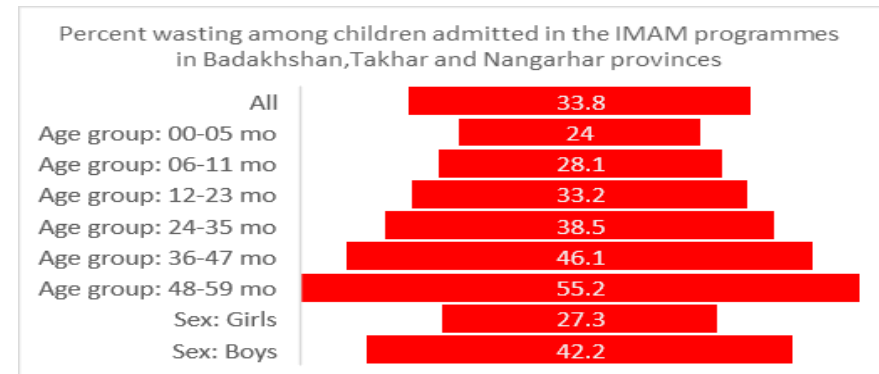
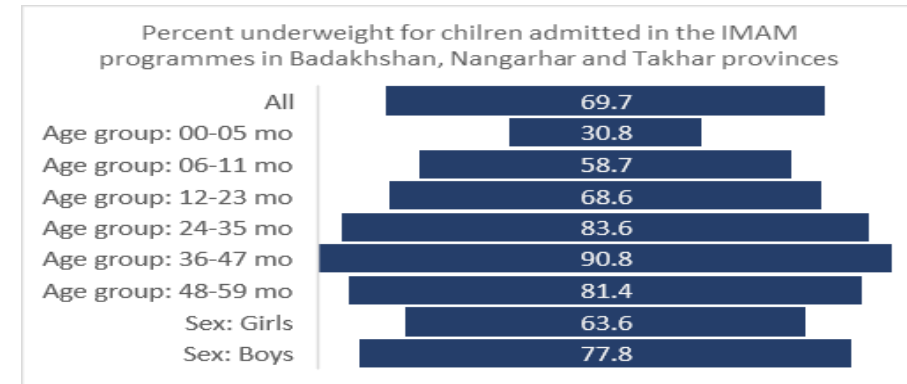
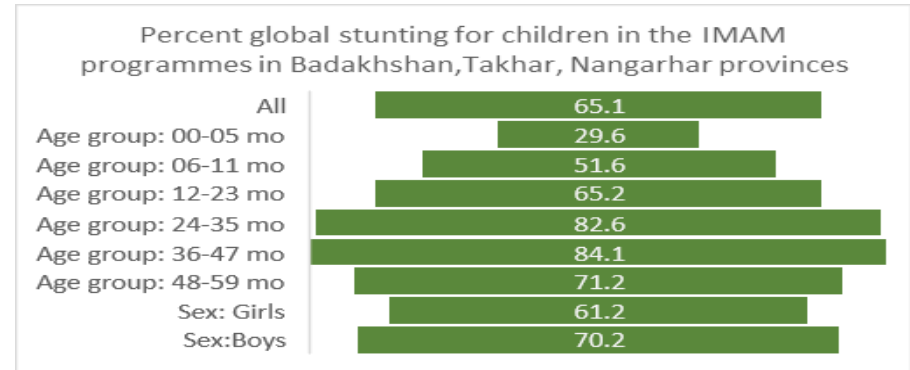
# Background and Objectives

Every year, 48,000 children die of malnutrition in Afghanistan. Suboptimal infant and young child practices is one of the major determinant of malnutrition that contributes to infant and child mortality when it combines with disease.

National data shows that 58% of children under 6 months are breastfed exclusively with 16% of under 2 years meeting the minimum requirements of feeding frequency and diet diversity.

Stunting levels remain exceedingly high with consistent prevalence's of more than 40%

WFP and partners implemented a project that provided specialized food and behaviour change interventions to improve young child feeding and diet practices.



# Methodology



The intervention was implemented in two districts: Shuhada and Shari Buzurg districts. A quasi-experimental pre-posttest study design with a control group was used to evaluate the study outcomes.



A total of 2,912 children <2 years of age and their mothers (1,456 per group per survey) were estimated to provide reasonable precision .



A structured survey questionnaire was used to collect data on demography, socio-economic status; IYCF practices and knowledge, attitudes, and practices. The baseline household survey was conducted between October and December 2020, and the endline household survey was conducted between July and August 2022.

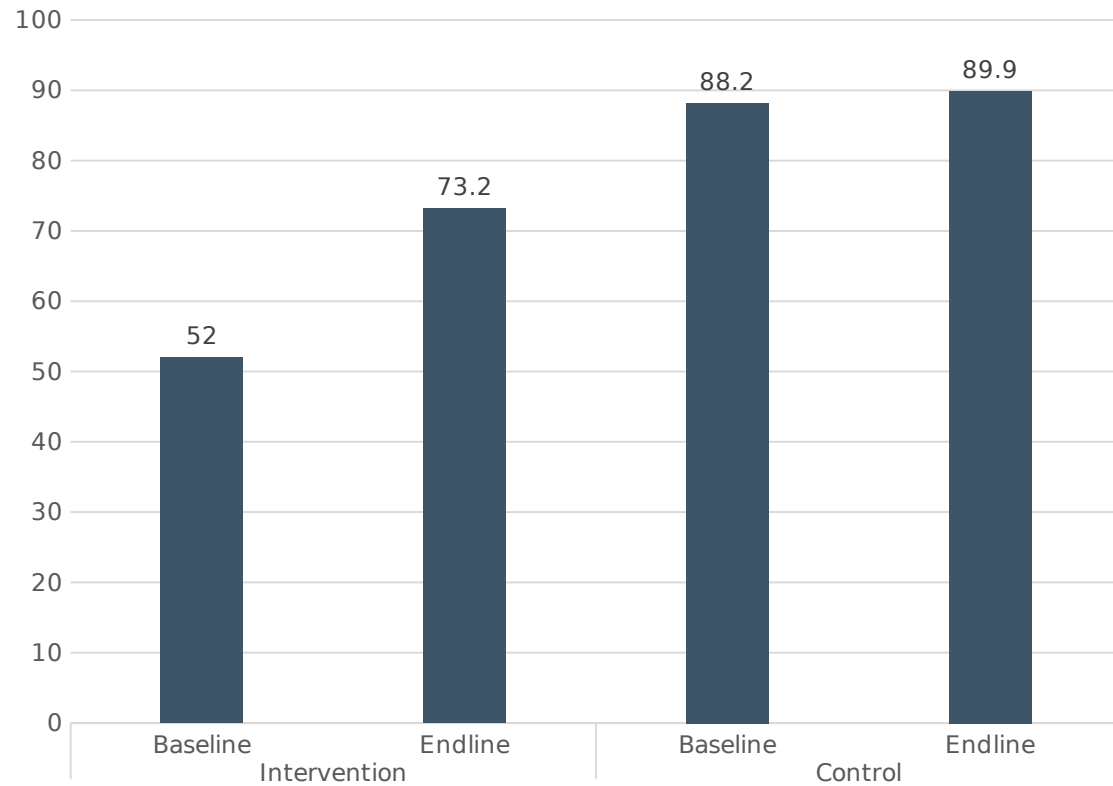
# Results

A significant improvement in early initiation of breastfeeding within 1 hour of birth (19.6%,  $p < 0.001$ ), exclusive breastfeeding under 6 months (11.0%,  $p = 0.014$ ), minimum meal frequency (23%,  $p < 0.001$ ) and children ever breastfed (4.7%,  $p < 0.001$ ). Continuation of breastfeeding until 1 year remained above 90% at both baseline and endline in both the intervention and control groups. Minimum acceptable diet improved in the intervention group (5% at baseline vs. 19.7% at endline) but not in the control group ( $p < 0.001$ ).

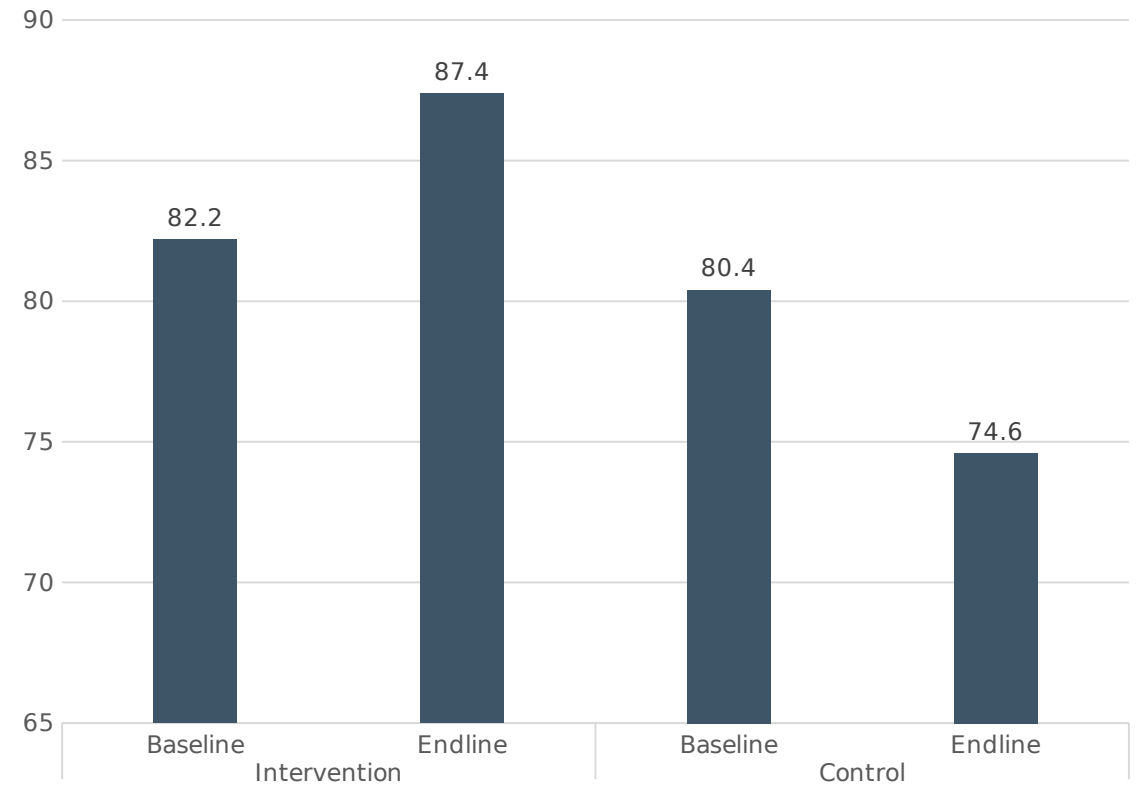
IYCF practices	Intervention				Control				DiD (%)	P-Value
	Baseline	Endline	Diff (%)	P-value	Baseline	Endline	Diff (%)	P-value		
Early initiation of breastfeeding (within 1 hr)	759 (52.0)	1,172 (73.2)	21.2	<0.001	1,294 (88.2)	1,442 (89.9)	1.7	0.241	19.60	<0.001
Exclusive breastfeeding under 6 months	198 (82.2)	292 (87.4)	5.2	0.110	274 (80.4)	250 (74.6)	-5.8	0.056	11.00	0.014
Continued breastfeeding at 1 year	263 (93.3)	277 (96.9)	3.6	0.03	258 (95.6)	285 (97.9)	2.3	0.153	1.20	0.607
Introduction of solid, semi-solid or soft foods	136 (52.9)	157 (61.3)	8.4	0.056	121 (51.5)	116 (52.3)	0.8	0.870	7.60	0.232
Minimum meal frequency	354 (29.0)	898 (70.9)	41.9	<0.001	342 (30.4)	625 (49.3)	18.9	<0.001	23.00	<0.001
Minimum acceptable diet	61 (5.0)	250 (19.7)	14.7	<0.001	63 (5.6)	92 (7.2)	1.6	0.160	13.10	<0.001
Minimum dietary diversity	236 (19.3)	302 (23.8)	4.5	0.002	79 (7.0)	127 (10.0)	3.0	0.039	1.50	0.459
Children ever breastfeed	1,358 (93.0)	1,568 (97.9)	4.9	<0.001	1,435 (97.8)	1,573 (98.1)	0.3	0.696	4.70	<0.001
Continued breastfeeding at 2 years	94 (87.0)	116 (85.3)	-1.7	0.675	116 (85.3)	211 (92.1)	6.8	0.050	-8.60	0.114

# Breastfeeding

Early initiation of breastfeeding (within 1 hr)

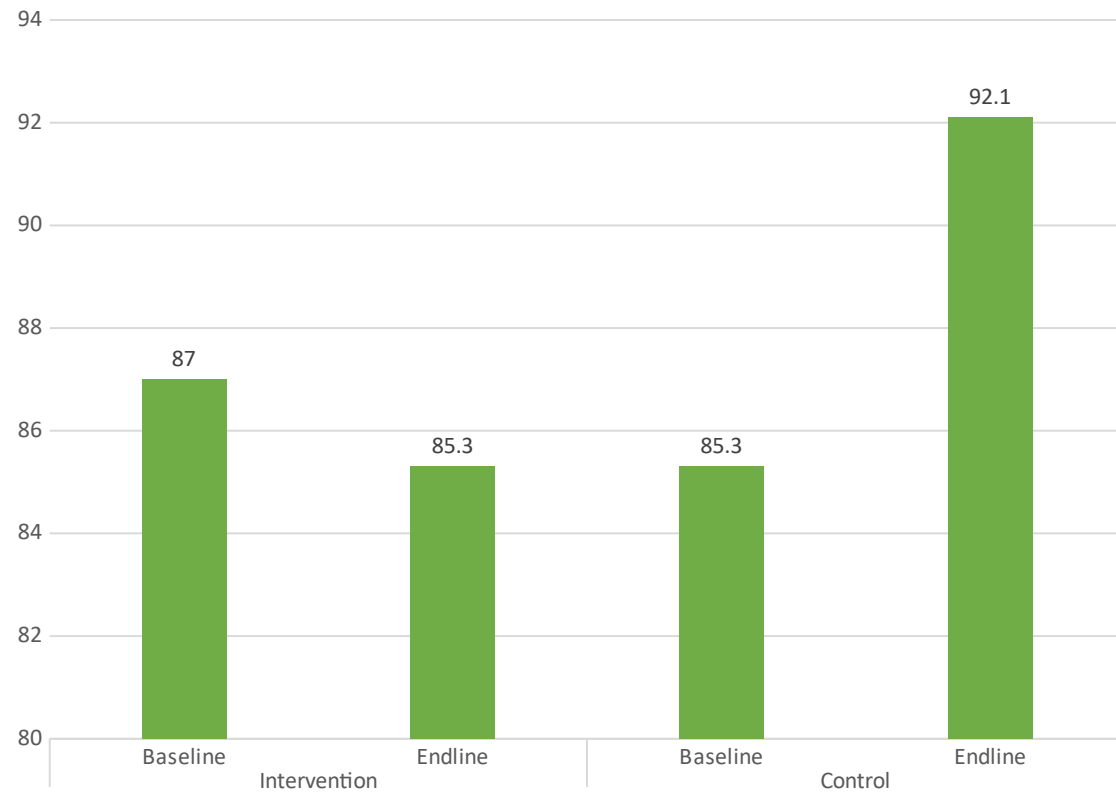


Exclusive breastfeeding under 6 months

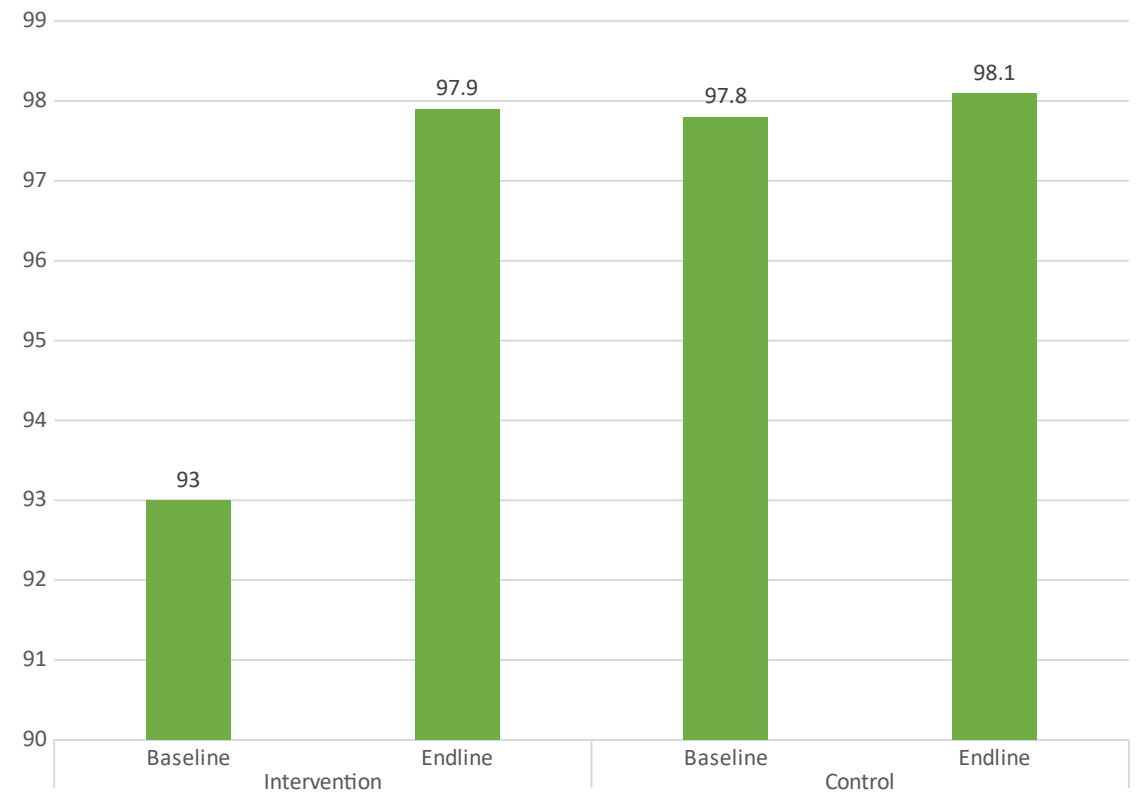


# Breastfeeding

Continued breastfeeding at 2 years

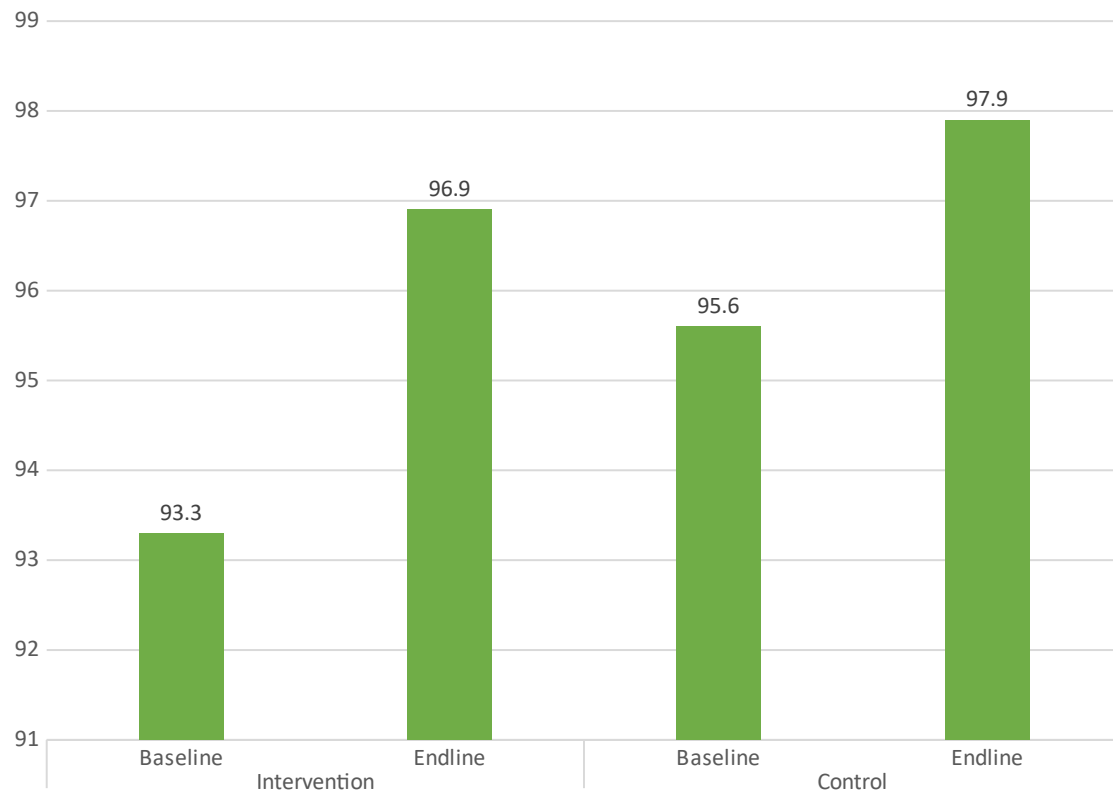


Children ever breastfeed

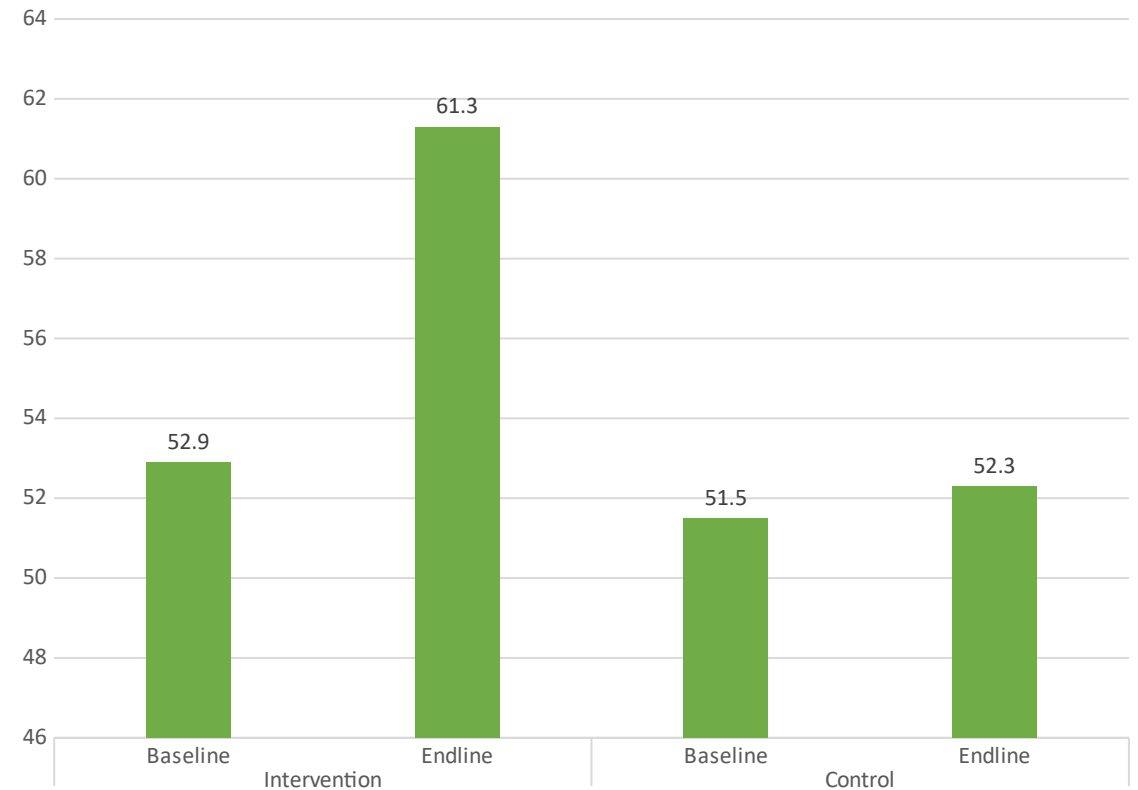


# Breastfeeding and complementary feeding

Continued breastfeeding at 1 year

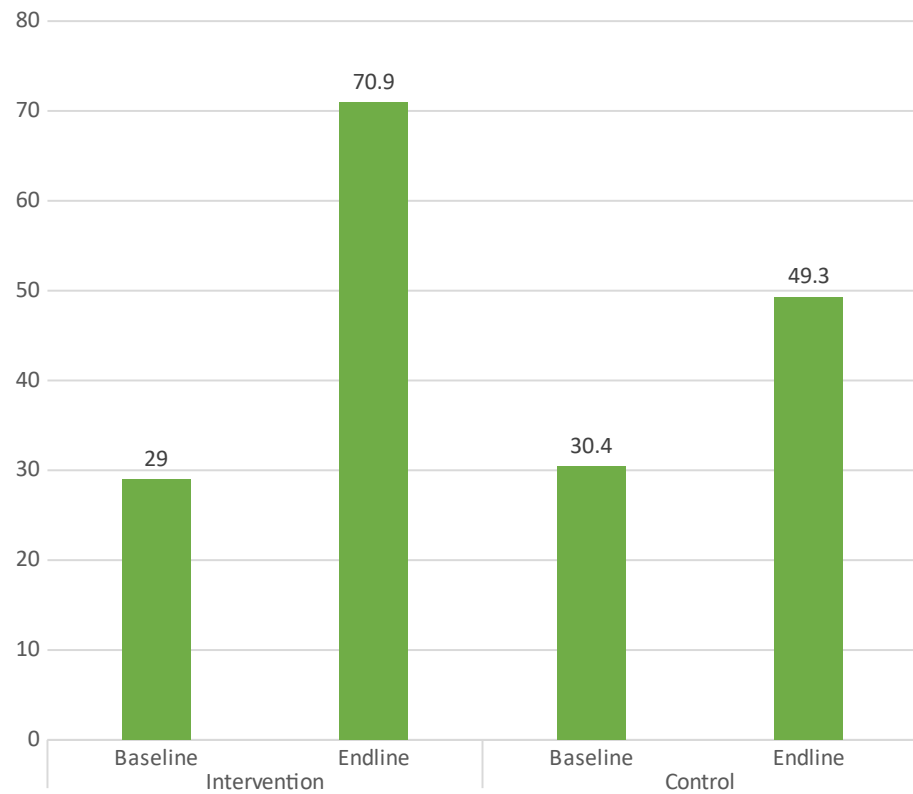


Introduction of solid, semi-solid or soft foods

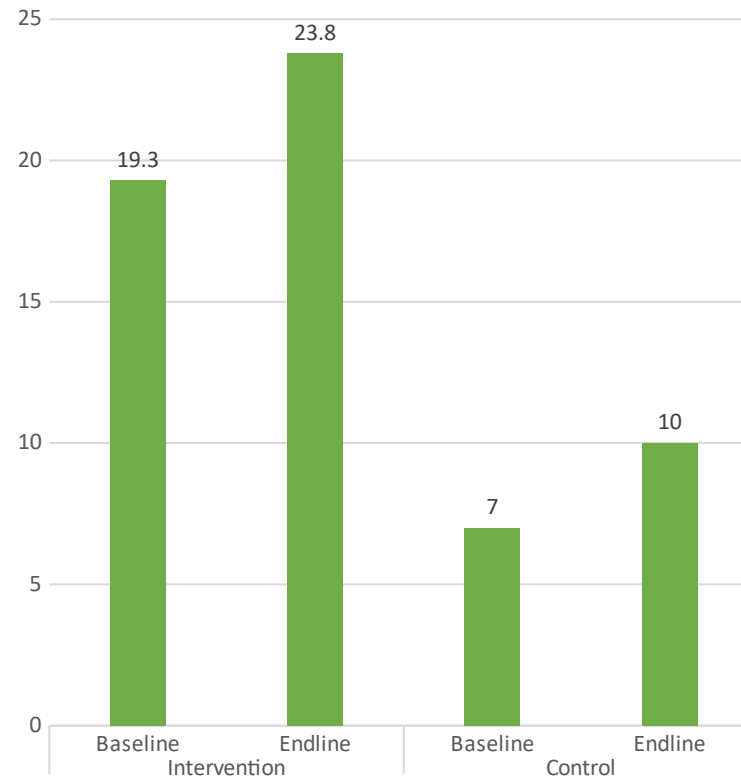


# Child Dietary Indicators

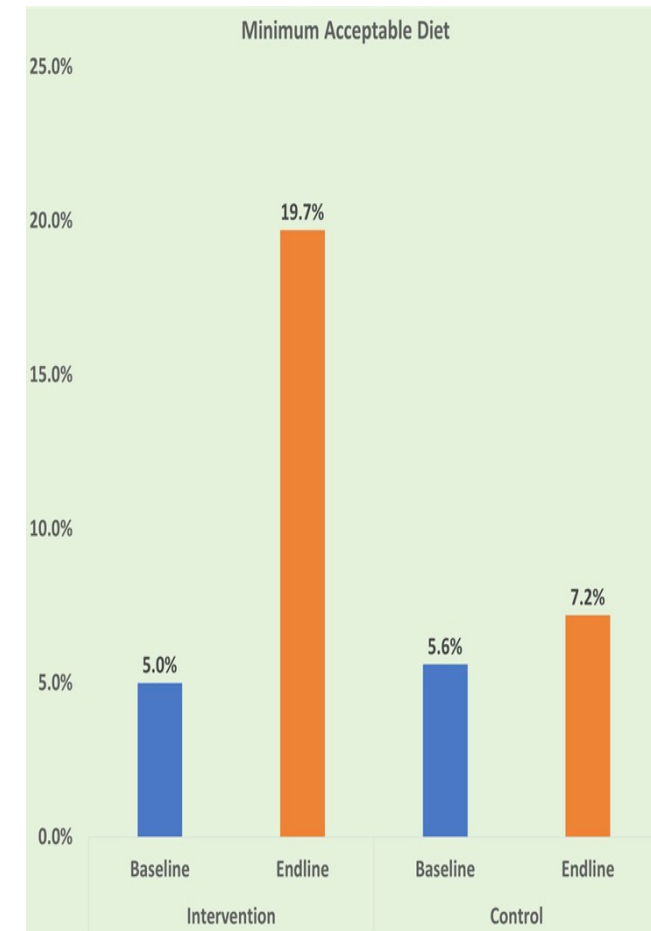
Minimum meal frequency



Minimum dietary diversity



Minimum Acceptable Diet





# Conclusion

Targeted SBCC interventions for pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls are shown to improve IYCF practices that benefit children under 2 years.



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