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Community based management of severe malnutrition: Severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and severe underweight (SUW) in below 5 years of age children of tribal area, Melghat, central India

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Background: Melghat has heavy burden of malnutrition, inadequate medical facilities and poor health seeking behavior by tribal. Hospital services have limited coverage and impact. Community based management of severe malnutrition is explored as alternative.

Objective: To assess feasibility of community based management of severely malnourished children (SMC) in tribal Melghat.

Methods: A community based prospective trial was conducted in tribal Melghat from August-October 2012 with six months follow-up. A representative sample of 145 SMCs in 6-60 months age group from randomly chosen 14 villages with one-stage cluster sampling was selected. Locally prepared MAHAN-RUTF (Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food) with micronutrients was given to SMCs for 90 days. Infection management and behavior change communication (BCC) of parents was done by Village Health Workers (VHWs).

Results: After 8 weeks 55.1% SAM and 15.6% SUW children recovered. Weight-gain/kg/day after 8th, 10th and 12th week among SAM was 2.6, 2.3, 2.2 gm and among SUW was 2.5, 1.9, 1.5 gm respectively. Case fatality rate for SAM was 2.0% and for SUW 0.8%. The relapse rates for recovered SAM and SUW were 3.03% and 11.1% respectively.

Conclusion: This pilot study of community based management of SAM and SUW is feasible and will be base for larger ongoing RCT.

Biography

Vibhawari S Dani with expertise in Counseling Psychology, Clinical Trials, Allied Health Science is on Research Gate. She is working in MAHAN Trust, Mahatma Gandhi Tribal Hospital.

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