



Malnutrition and child development: Gross Motor Milestones

► Project Duration

January 2013 – ongoing

► Intervention Zone

To be defined

► Project objectives

The objective of this project is to define a positioning on the use of indicators of child development in nutrition and psychosocial programs for identifying children in need.

► CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Linkages between malnutrition and child development have been proven in different studies. ACF started to explore this question in 2006 with a first consultation with Ernesto Pollitt. The objective was to choose tools that are easy to use for the staffs without specific qualifications and that can be included in nutrition surveys or programmes: the Gross Motor development Milestones, figures of a child at different stages of development, have been chosen.

Because it is not always possible on the field to offer a support for promoting child development for all the children (in particular with the new modalities of treatment of malnutrition), it is extremely important to develop a screening tool, easy to use and efficient for detecting children that need further support.

Up to now, the Gross motor development Milestones have been used in ACF nutrition surveys in three different countries (Afghanistan, Burma and Nepal) between April 2007 and September 2008, in order to test the interest and the pertinence of their utilization. In general, around 5 figures are used (fig. 4, 11, 12, 13 & 16 of WHO methodology) showing a child sitting without assistance, hands and knees-crawling, standing with assistance... Plus, questions are asked to the mothers rather than using observations.

So far, the first two phases of the project have been completed: phase 1 being the consultancy from Ernesto Pollitt about the possible work on child development and malnutrition, and phase 2 an evaluation of the feasibility of using this tool in different ACF settings.



FIG. 3. Standing with assistance

Source: WHO, 2004

► SUMMARY

This present research corresponds to the phases 3 and 4 of the project: on-going phase 3 aims at analyzing the results from the different studies run in the field using the walking figures and to define recommendations for the field. Phase 4 of the project will be designed to test the recommendations on the field.

The project will need to: 1) Analyse, synthesize and finalize the different projects that have been done by ACF on the linkages between malnutrition and child development; 2) Define a positioning on the use of indicators of child development in nutrition and psychosocial programs for identifying children that need a better support in development; 3) Test the recommendations on the field for the finalisation of the research.

Any population from low and middle income country affected by malnutrition could benefit from this new tool to improve support to child development by detecting early motor delay and by providing adequate psychosocial support focusing on motor skills development.

At local and national level, this research project could help to improve primary health care prevention and the tool could be integrated in the national health system as a screening tool (as already used by WHO).

▶ PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

- ◆ To define a positioning on the use of indicators of child development in nutrition and psychosocial programs for identifying children who need a better support in development.

▶ SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- ◆ To validate the benefit of using the Gross Motor Development Milestones as a child development tool surveillance in ACF fields of interventions.
- ◆ To ensure that the tool is easy-to-use and significant as a screening tool.

▶ RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ◆ The level of child development is associated with nutritional status of the child (either acute or chronic undernutrition)
- ◆ There is a similar association between undernutrition and child development between the different contexts;
- ◆ There is an influence of children's age or other variables on the link between child development and undernutrition;
- ◆ The measure of gross motor development may act as a tracer for other areas of development;

<p>▶ Implementing agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Action Contre la Faim - France <p>▶ Sponsor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Action Contre la Faim – France <p>▶ Scientific partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To be defined 	<p>▶ For more details, do not hesitate to call :</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cécile BIZOUERNE MHCP Senior Advisor cbizouerne@actioncontrelafaim.org</p>
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