

The Association between Nutritional Status and Household Sanitation among Rural Children in the Tibetan and Sichuan Minority Areas: A Cross-Sectional Study

Xian Zhu^{1,2,3}

Chenglu Liu^{1,2,3}

Chang Xu^{1,2,3}

Wei Jiang^{1,2,3}

Xiaofeng Zhang^{1,2,3}

Yajun Liu^{1,2,3}

Mingjing Li^{1,2,3}

Hong Xu^{*1,2,3}

¹School of Public Health and Management, Chongqing Medical University, China

²Research Center for Medicine and Social Development, Chongqing Medical University, China

³Innovation Center for Social Risk Governance in Health, Chongqing Medical University, China

Abstract

To investigate the nutritional status and household sanitation among children under 5 years in Tibetan and Sichuan minority areas and to analyse the association between nutritional status and household sanitation. A cross-sectional survey was conducted by the probability proportional to size sampling method between August and October 2016. Bivariate and multivariate logistic regression analyses were used to analyse the association between nutritional status and household sanitation. A total of 965 children under the age of 5 and their caregivers were included. The rates of stunting, underweight, wasting, overweight, obesity and normal development of children in Sichuan and Tibet were 19.8%, 8.0%, 5.2%, 4.6%, 1.8% and 69.0%, respectively. There was statistically significant differences in children's household sanitation status with different family income. Multivariate logistic regression results showed that the other unprotected water sources, unboiled drinking water, sanitary and dry toilets, unsanitary and dry toilets, usually do not washing hands at critical times, washing hands only with water and unsanitary treatment of children's faeces were the risk factors for stunting in children. Protected well water, other unprotected water sources, unsanitary and dry toilets, washing hands at only one critical moment, washing hands only with water and unsanitary treatment of children's faeces were risk factors for underweight in children. The malnutrition of children under 5 years of age in the rural areas home to ethnic minorities in Sichuan and Tibet is serious. The children's household sanitation status is poor, and household sanitation has an impact on both the height and the weight of the child. The relevant departments should increase the family's economic income while conducting household sanitation interventions, thereby reducing the incidence and mortality due to malnutrition.

Keywords: Malnutrition, Household sanitation, Children under 5, Ethnic minority.

Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated in 2018 that

Article Information

Article Type: Research Article

Article Number: JPI-129

Received Date: 17 December, 2020

Accepted Date: 13 January, 2021

Published Date: 20 January, 2021

***Corresponding author:** Hong Xu, School of Public Health and Management, Chongqing Medical University, Chongqing 400016, China. Tel: +86-13983090123; E-mail: xuhong@cqmu.edu.cn

Citation: Zhu X, Liu C, Xu C, Jiang W, Zhang X et al. (2021) The Association between Nutritional Status and Household Sanitation among Rural Children in the Tibetan and Sichuan Minority Areas: A Cross-Sectional Study. J Pediat Infants Vol: 4, Issu: 1 (18-24).

Copyright: © 2021 Xu H et al. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

approximately 52 million children under the age of 5 are wasting, 17 million are severely wasting, 155 million are stunted, 41 million are overweight/obese, and approximately 45% of deaths among children under 5 are related to malnutrition [1]. Children aged 0~5 years old are the age group most likely to suffer malnutrition, and nutritional status in the early stage of life is directly related to subsequent growth and development, learning, cognitive ability and even labour productivity in adulthood [2-4]. In 2012, the World Health Assembly planned to reduce global under-five malnutrition to less than 100 million children by 2025 and to end all forms of malnutrition by 2030 [5-6].

The incidence of child malnutrition has decreased greatly since China's economic reform. In 1990, the rate of stunting among children under 5 years of age in China was 31.3%, and the rate of underweight was 7.4%. In 2010, these figures decreased to 9.4% and 3.4%, respectively [7]. However, the differences between urban and rural areas and regions cannot be ignored; the rates are obviously higher in rural areas than in urban areas, and the rates are obviously higher in poor areas than in economically developed areas [8-11]. A previous study showed that the rate of stunting among children under 5 years of age was 15.9%, the underweight rate was 7.8%, and the wasting rate was 3.7% in poor areas of China [12]. In 2017, the National Nutrition Plan issued by the State Council of China (2017-2030) explicitly stated that the rate of stunting among children under 5 should be less than 7% in 2020 and below 5% in 2030, indicating the main development goal of child nutrition [13].

Tibet and Yi nationality areas of Sichuan are located in western China, which is a relatively backward economic area. In addition, the Tibetan and Yi ethnic minorities are the two of the most representative ethnic minorities in China, with the most complete national customs and habits and the most prominent national characteristics. A survey conducted in 2011 showed that the rates of stunting, underweight and wasting among children in the minority areas of Sichuan and Tibet were 30.5%, 16.5% and 1.6%, respectively [14], which are much higher than those of children in other parts of China; therefore, these children should receive increasing attention from relevant Chinese and international bodies.

Household sanitation refers to all family-related sanitation, including household sanitation facilities, such as toilets, drinking water sanitation and the hygiene behaviour of caregivers and children. There are many factors that affect the malnutrition of children, mainly including the family financial situation, the child's age, feeding habits, hygiene behaviour and the child's state of health. Studies have shown that there is a clear correlation between children diarrhea and family environmental hygiene [15-17]. However, there are few studies on the effect of household sanitation on chronic malnutrition in Chinese children. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyse the association between household sanitation and the nutritional status of children and to provide a scientific intervention strategy for improving the nutritional status of rural children in poor minority areas.

Methods

Methods and data collection

The study population included children under 5 years of age and their caregivers. A cross-sectional survey was conducted from August to October 2016, and the main investigated areas were Ganluo County and Yuexi County in Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan and Saga County and Aung Ren County in Xigaze region of Tibet. The probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling was used to select sample villages. The main steps were as follows: step 1: 15 administrative villages were randomly selected in each county according to the PPS sampling method; step 2: 2 natural villages in each administrative village were randomly selected by PPS sampling; step 3: In Sichuan, after the natural village was determined, 8 caregivers were randomly selected from each natural village according to the family roster containing children under 5 years of age. In Tibet, administrative villages could not be divided into natural villages, and 5 caregivers were randomly selected from each administrative village according to the family roster containing children under age 5 years of age. If a sample village failed to meet the proposed sample size, another sample village was randomly selected in the same layer until the intended sample size was achieved. The number of people surveyed in each county of Sichuan needed to reach 240, and the number of people surveyed in each county of Tibet needed to reach 70. At least 620 caregivers of children under the age of five were investigated in Sichuan and Tibet. (8 or 5 households in each natural village were chosen for the survey because the Tibetan and Yi areas of Sichuan are sparsely populated.) The inclusion criteria were as follows: 1. The children's age range: the children were born after the date of the 2011 survey; 2. Long-term local residence: the local residence time was 2/3 greater than the child's age. The exclusion criterion was that the children were not at home at the time of the investigation.

The questionnaire was designed by the Maternal and Child Health Project expert group. The main contents included the basic characteristics of the children and their caregivers, the feeding situation of the children, the situation of household sanitation and the physical examination of the children, such as, height and weight, etc.

All investigators were uniformly trained, with an investigation team of 4 to 5 qualified investigators led by local village doctors. Using one-on-one question and answer, the investigators filled out questionnaires on the PAD on the spot. Subsequently, the questionnaires were uploaded to the database. Finally, the data verification was carried out by the evaluation team of Peking University. The physical examination of each child was carried out by two investigators using standardized equipment in accordance with the international standard method of measurement [18]. Lying length was measured of children under 2 years old; and standing height was measured of children older than 2 years old. Each child's length/height and weight were measured twice to take the mean value. A third measurement was required if the error of the two measures was greater than 0.05 kg for weight and more than 0.1 cm for length/height.

Data analysis

The primary outcome measures were nutritional status of children, including, length/height-for-age (HAZ) < median-2 standard deviation (M-2SD) was considered stunting; weight-for-age (WAZ) < M-2SD was considered underweight; weight-for-height (WHZ) < M-2SD was considered wasting, M+2SD ~ M+3SD was considered overweight, >M+3SD was considered obese; children without stunting, underweight, wasting, overweight and obesity were defined as normally developing. Child growth and development standards published by the WHO in 2006 [18].

Basic characteristics of children and their caregivers included children's sex, age (0~, 12~, 24~, 36~ and 48~59 months), area, ethnic, caregivers, mother's educational level (illiterate/primary school, junior middle school, senior high school and above) and household per capita net income (0~, 308~, ≥769 dollars).

Household sanitation included drinking water source (purified tap water, protected well water, unprotected well water and others). Whether to boil before drinking water? (boiled and unboiled). Toilet type (flush sanitary toilet, flush unsanitary toilet, sanitary and dry toilet and unsanitary and dry toilet). Washing hands at critical moments: a total of 8 critical moments are listed: after the completion of agricultural work, before cooking, before dining, before feeding the baby, after defecation, after handling the child's faeces, other and usually do not wash hands. The analysis was grouped by number, and the four groups include the option usually do not wash hands, 1, 2, 3 and above. Washing hand mode including soap and only water. Child's faeces treatment including sanitary and unsanitary.

Descriptive analysis was used to present the basic characteristics of children and caregivers. Chi-square test was used to compare nutritional status of children in different ages and the household sanitation of children in different

family income. We examined the association between nutritional status of children and household sanitation using bivariate and multivariate logistic regression analysis. All data analyses were performed using SPSS21.0. P <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Results

Basic characteristics of children and their caregivers

A total of 965 children under 5 years and their caregivers were included in this study. Of these, 51.7% were boys. Those aged 0~, 12~, 24~, 36~ and 48~59 months were 33.5%, 28.2%, 20.7%, 10.5% and 7.2%, respectively. A vast majority of the respondents in Sichuan (84.5%) and most of the respondents were from Yi (71.7%). A total of 721 (74.7%) mothers were surveyed, of whom 85.4% were illiterate/had primary school education. 54.6% of respondents reported their household per capita net income. Incomes of 0~, 308~ and ≥ 769 dollars were reported by 36.8%, 40.0% and 23.1% of the families, respectively (Table 1).

Nutritional status of children

The rates of stunting, underweight, wasting, overweight, obesity and normal development among the children were 19.8%, 8.0%, 5.2%, 4.6%, 1.8% and 69.0%, respectively. There were significant differences in the normal development rate, stunting rate, overweight rate and obesity rate among children of different ages. There were significant differences in the normal development rate, stunting rate and overweight rate among boys of different ages. The differences in the normal developmental rate, stunting rate and obesity rate among girls of different ages were statistically significant. With increasing age, the rate of normally developing children decreased, and the minimum normal development rate among boys between 48 and 59 months was 55.0%. With the increase in the age of the child,

Variables		n	%
Sex	boy	499	51.7
	girl	466	48.3
Age (month)	0~	323	33.5
	12~	272	28.2
	24~	200	20.7
	36~	101	10.5
	48~59	69	7.2
Area	Sichuan	815	84.5
	Tibet	150	15.5
Ethnic	Han	117	12.1
	Yi	692	71.7
	Tibetan	156	16.2
Caregivers	mother	721	74.7
	others	244	25.3
Mother's educational level (n=721)	illiterate / primary school	616	85.4
	junior middle school	88	12.2
	senior high school and above	17	2.4
Family income (dollars) (n=527)	0~	194	36.8
	308~	211	40.0
	≥769	122	23.1

Table 1: Basic characteristics of children and their caregivers (n=965).

Sex	Age (month)	Stunting	Underweight	Wasting	Overweight	Obesity	Normal development
Boys	0~	6.2	6.8	8.0	8.0	2.5	74.1
	12~	18.8	6.9	3.5	2.1	0	73.6
	24~	30.4	8.8	4.9	2.9	2.0	62.7
	36~	29.4	3.9	2.0	2.0	2.0	64.7
	48~59	37.5	5.0	5.0	10.0	0	55.0
	total	19.6	6.8	5.2	4.8	1.4	69.1
χ^2		33.596 ^a	1.532	4.592	10.031	6.593	7.819 ^a
P		<0.001	0.821	0.332	0.040	0.159	0.005
Girls	0~	5.6	6.8	5.6	6.2	4.3	75.2
	12~	21.1	10.9	4.7	1.6	0	72.7
	24~	33.7	9.2	5.1	4.1	3.1	58.2
	36~	32.0	8.0	4.0	6.0	0	62.0
	48~59	27.6	17.2	6.9	3.4	0	65.5
	total	20.0	9.2	5.2	4.3	2.1	68.9
χ^2		27.759 ^a	3.863	0.437	4.181	12.202	6.269 ^a
P		<0.001	0.425	0.979	0.382	0.016	0.012
Total	0~	5.9	6.8	6.8	7.1	3.4	74.6
	12~	19.9	8.8	4.0	1.8	0	73.2
	24~	32.0	9.0	5.0	3.5	2.5	60.5
	36~	30.7	5.9	3.0	4.0	1.0	63.4
	48~59	33.3	10.1	5.8	7.2	0	59.4
	total	19.8	8.0	5.2	4.6	1.8	69.0
χ^2		61.302 ^a	2.161	3.534	11.242	17.063	14.069 ^a
P		<0.001	0.706	0.473	0.024	0.002	<0.001

Note: ^alinear trend chi-square test.**Table 2:** Assessment of the status of children's malnutrition (n =965) (%).

Variables		Family income (%)			χ^2	P
		0~	308~	≥769		
Drinking water source	purified tap water	33 (17.0)	28 (13.3)	44 (36.1)	28.469	<0.001
	protected well water	21 (10.8)	31 (14.7)	13 (10.7)		
	unprotected well water	125 (64.4)	132 (62.6)	58 (47.5)		
	others	15 (7.7)	20 (9.5)	7 (5.7)		
Boiling before drinking	boiled	68 (35.1)	111 (52.6)	76 (62.3)	24.768	<0.001
	unboiled	126 (64.9)	100 (47.4)	46 (37.7)		
Toilet type	flush sanitary toilet	18 (9.3)	22 (10.4)	31 (25.4)	39.831	<0.001
	flush unsanitary toilet	1 (0.5)	17 (8.1)	6 (4.9)		
	sanitary and dry toilet	123 (63.4)	137 (64.9)	70 (57.4)		
	unsanitary and dry toilet	52 (26.8)	35 (16.6)	15 (12.3)		
Washing hands at critical moments	usually don not wash hands	27 (13.9)	22 (10.4)	6 (4.9)	17.377	0.008
	one	89 (45.9)	81 (38.4)	48 (39.3)		
	two	54 (27.8)	65 (30.8)	34 (27.9)		
	three and above	24 (12.4)	43 (20.4)	34 (27.9)		
Washing hand mode	soap	49 (25.3)	74 (35.1)	60 (49.2)	18.929	<0.001
	only water	145 (74.7)	137 (64.9)	62 (50.8)		
Child's faeces treatment	sanitary	99 (51.0)	128 (60.7)	85 (69.7)	11.087	0.004
	unsanitary	95 (49.0)	83 (39.3)	37 (30.3)		

Table 3: Comparison of the household sanitation of children in different family income (n = 527).

the rate of stunting increased, and the rate of stunting of boys of 48~59 months was up to 37.5% (Table 2).

Household sanitation of children

Among these 965 households, 16.0% of respondents had the source of water was purified tap water, 42.8% of respondents reported water was boiled before drinking, 13.0% of respondents had the toilet was flushed, 16.5% of caregivers reported hands were washed at three or more critical moments, 36.4% of caregivers reported hands were washed with soap and 59.4% of respondents reported the

child's faeces were treated hygienically. The chi-square test results showed that there were significant differences in drinking water source, whether water was boiled before drinking, toilet type, hand washing at critical moments, washing hand mode and treatment of children's faeces among families with different incomes (Table 3).

The association between nutritional status and household sanitation

After adjusting for factors including age, sex and region, other unprotected water sources (AOR=3.21,

95%CI=1.41~7.32), unboiled drinking water (AOR=2.05, 95%CI=1.41~2.97), sanitary and dry toilets (AOR=2.04, 95%CI=1.12~3.71), unsanitary and dry toilets (AOR=2.80, 95%CI=1.42~5.51), usually do not washing hands at critical moments (AOR=2.11, 95%CI=1.15~3.90), washing hands only with water (AOR=1.53, 95%CI=1.03~2.26), and unsanitary treatment of children's faeces (AOR=1.56, 95%CI=1.11~2.20) were risk factors for stunting in children (Table 4).

After adjusting for factors including age, gender and region, protected well water (AOR=4.28, 95%CI=1.46~12.52), other

unprotected water sources (AOR=4.30, 95%CI=1.36~13.61), unsanitary and dry toilets (AOR=4.44, 95%CI=1.26~15.59), washing hands at only one critical moment (AOR=2.77, 95%CI=1.15~6.65), washing hands only with water (AOR=2.22, 95%CI=1.20~4.09) and unsanitary treatment of children's faeces (AOR=2.01, 95%CI=1.23~3.28) were risk factors for underweight in children (Table 4).

Discussion

Malnutrition is still the main public health problem affecting children in poor rural areas in China. The rates of stunting, underweight and wasting were higher than those

Variables		Morbidity rate(%)	COR(95%CI)	P	AOR(95%CI)	P
Stunting						
Drinking water source	purified tap water	13.6	1		1	
	protected well water	25.6	2.18 (1.12~4.25)	0.022	1.98 (0.92~4.24)	0.081
	unprotected well water	19.4	1.52 (0.92~2.51)	0.100	1.38 (0.82~2.31)	0.223
	others	31.3	2.88 (1.43~5.80)	0.003	3.21 (1.41~7.32)	0.005
Boiling before drinking	boiled	15.0	1		1	
	unboiled	23.4	1.73 (1.24~2.41)	0.001	2.05 (1.41~2.97)	<0.001
Toilet type	flush sanitary toilet	12.0	1		1	
	flush unsanitary toilet	17.3	1.54 (0.63~3.77)	0.350	1.91 (0.75~4.85)	0.173
	sanitary and dry toilet	19.8	1.82 (1.02~3.22)	0.042	2.04 (1.12~3.71)	0.020
	unsanitary and dry toilet	26.2	2.60 (1.37~4.93)	0.003	2.80 (1.42~5.51)	0.003
Washing hands at critical moments	usually don not wash hands	15.1	1		1	
	one	28.3	2.22 (1.24~4.01)	0.008	2.11 (1.15~3.90)	0.017
	two	20.9	1.49 (0.91~2.43)	0.116	1.52 (0.91~2.53)	0.111
	three and above	16.9	1.14 (0.66~1.97)	0.635	1.14 (0.65~2.00)	0.660
Washing hand mode	soap	15.1	1		1	
	only water	21.0	1.50 (1.04~2.15)	0.030	1.53 (1.03~2.26)	0.034
Child's faeces treatment	sanitary	18.3	1		1	
	unsanitary	21.9	1.25 (0.91~1.72)	0.167	1.56 (1.11~2.20)	0.011
Underweight						
Drinking water source	purified tap water	3.9	1		1	
	protected well water	17.4	5.21 (1.94~14.00)	0.001	4.28 (1.46~12.52)	0.008
	unprotected well water	6.8	1.80 (0.76~4.30)	0.185	1.87 (0.77~4.52)	0.166
	others	17.2	5.12 (1.80~14.53)	0.002	4.30 (1.36~13.61)	0.013
Boiling before drinking	boiled	8.5	1		1	
	unboiled	7.6	0.89 (0.56~1.42)	0.623	1.20 (0.72~2.01)	0.491
Toilet type	flush sanitary toilet	2.4	1		1	
	flush unsanitary toilet	5.8	2.49 (0.47~12.76)	0.274	2.48 (0.48~12.77)	0.277
	sanitary and dry toilet	8.1	3.57 (1.10~11.63)	0.035	3.03 (0.92~9.98)	0.068
	unsanitary and dry toilet	12.5	5.81 (1.69~19.94)	0.005	4.44 (1.26~15.59)	0.020
Washing hands at critical moments	usually don not wash hands	3.8	1		1	
	one	9.2	2.57 (0.92~7.17)	0.071	2.18 (0.77~6.13)	0.141
	two	10.2	2.90 (1.21~6.94)	0.017	2.77 (1.15~6.65)	0.023
	three and above	6.3	1.71 (0.65~4.46)	0.275	1.56 (0.59~4.09)	0.370
Washing hand mode	soap	4.3	1		1	
	only water	10.3	2.57 (1.42~4.66)	0.002	2.22 (1.20~4.09)	0.011
Child's faeces treatment	sanitary	5.8	1		1	
	unsanitary	11.2	2.07 (1.29~3.31)	0.002	2.01 (1.23~3.28)	0.005

Table 4: The effect of the different household sanitation on the nutritional status of children.

according to the 2009 China Food and Nutrition Monitoring system (CFNSS) [19] and Yu [12]. It is also higher than the survey results in other ordinary rural areas, poor areas and ethnic minority areas [20-25]. The malnutrition of children in the Tibetan and Sichuan minority areas is serious, which is quite different from that in other regions.

The rate of stunting in this survey was 19.8%, which was lower than the rate of 30.5% found in 2011 [26] but still much higher than the target rate of 7% in 2025 [13]. The change may be a result of the common effects of socioeconomic changes, child-feeding habits and environmental hygiene changes. The rate of stunting increased with age, and the rate of stunting in the group of 48~59-month-old boys was 37.5%, which is consistent with the findings of previous studies [27-30]. One possible explanation is that the children were malnourished for a long time, and the higher stunting rate accompanied increasing age.

A large number of studies have shown that the higher the family's economic level is, the lower the rate of child malnutrition [31-36]. A study conducted in Vietnam has shown that the impact of socioeconomic inequality on child malnutrition increases over time and that socioeconomic status is the first cause of inequality in stunting and the second cause of inequality in underweight [37]. The study found that the sanitation situation of the family in Sichuan and Tibet was poor, and the household sanitation of the families with different economic conditions was obviously different. The household environmental sanitation may have been affected by the economic situation of the family.

Our study showed that household sanitation had an important impact on the children's height and weight after adjusting for confounding factors. Thus, household sanitation may be a direct factor of the nutrition of children. Although similar studies have shown that household sanitation facilities, water sources and household hygiene behaviours are major contributors to children diarrhea [38-40]. Poor sanitation is likely to have an impact on the nutritional status of children by increasing the risk that the children catch an infectious disease [41-44]. Therefore, intervention in household sanitation may reduce the malnutrition among children.

There are also several limitations bearing in mind. Due to a variety of reasons, 438 (45.4%) people were reluctant to disclose their family income, and maybe have some influence on our analysis results. Besides, this study is a cross-sectional study, which cannot be used to draw causality conclusions. Further verification research should be carried out to clarify the impact of family hygiene conditions on the nutritional status of children.

Conclusion

The malnutrition of children in the Tibetan and Sichuan minority areas is serious. Stunting, underweight and wasting among children are obvious, especially the phenomenon of stunting, which is the most serious. The household sanitation status of the children is poor, household sanitation has an impact on both the height and the weight of the child. However, household sanitation can be affected by the

family's economic level. The relevant departments should take drinking water, sanitary toilets and individual hygiene as the main household hygiene intervention items, and at the same time increase family income, thereby reducing the morbidity and mortality resulting from malnutrition.

Authors' Contribution

HX designed and performed the study. XZ analyzed the data and results interpretation and wrote the paper. CLL and CX and MJL analyzed the data and paper modification. WJ, XFZ and YJL participated in data collection and quality control. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Acknowledgement

The authors thank all the caregivers of the children for participating in the study; all the investigators involved in the project investigation, including Hong Xu, Xiaofeng Zhang, Yajun Liu, Wei Jiang, Dongtao Yin, Wei Xu, Zhen Qin, Qiang He, Jing Feng, Dan Peng, Zhongshuang Zhang, Xinxin Pu, et al, as well as the administrative units of Sichuan and Tibet and the Department of Health and local clinics for their collaboration and support.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Funding

This study was supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

References

1. World Health Organization (2019) Malnutrition.
2. Chao F, Zhang SF, Fu PY, Zhang D (2013) Analysis of growth, development and anemia of children under 5 years of age in rural areas of Henan Province. *China Health Statistics* 30: 585-586.
3. Guerrant RL, Oria RB, Moore SR, Oria MO, Lima AA (2008) Malnutrition as an enteric infectious disease with long-term effects on child development. *Nutr Rev* 66: 487-505.
4. Lelijveld N, Seal A, Wells JC, Kirkby J, Opondo C, et al. (2016) Chronic disease outcomes after severe acute malnutrition in Malawian children (ChroSAM): a cohort study. *Lancet Glob Health* 4: e654-62.
5. World Health Organization (2012) Comprehensive implementation plan on maternal, infant and young child nutrition. 65th World Health Assembly, WHO, Geneva.
6. Sustainable Development Goals (2019).
7. Zhang Y (2017) Study on nutritional status and influencing factors of 5-year-old children in Huangpi District of Wuhan City. *Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan*.
8. Zong X, Li H (2014) Physical growth of children and adolescents in China over the past 35 years. *Bull World Health Organ* 92: 555-564.
9. He ZQ, Sun Y, Yang HP, Luo Y, Yan M, et al. (2017) Epidemiological survey of malnutrition among children under 5 years of age in Guiyang. *China Maternal and Child Health* 32: 5400-5402.
10. Man SL, Guo Y (2016) Research on the social determinants of malnutrition among children under the age of 5 in China. *Journal of Peking University. Health sciences* 48: 418-423.
11. Yang Q, Zhang Y, Zhu GW, Xu X (2016) Investigation and analysis of nutritional status of Tibetan children aged 0 to 7 in Saskan County, Tibet. *Chinese Journal of Child Health* 24: 638-641.
12. Yu DM, Liu AD, Yu WT, Zhang B, Zhang JG, et al. (2011) Malnutrition and

- its influencing factors in children under 5 years of age in poor areas of China in 2009. *Health study* 40: 714-718.
13. General Office of the State Council (2019) Notice of the General Office of the State Council on Printing and Issuing National Nutrition Plan (2017-2030).
 14. Chen YZ, Tang XJ, Xu H, Wen J (2014) Investigation on the status of growth and development of children under the age of 3 in the western minority area of sichuan and the analysis of the influencing factors. *Journal of Shanghai Jiaotong University (Medical Edition)* 34: 1805-1810.
 15. Jovana D, Chiara A, Mahamat B, Mark M, Brigitte P, Francois B, et al. (2018) Individual and household risk factors of severe acute malnutrition among under-five children in Mao, Chad: a matched case-control study. *Archives of Public Health* 76: 35.
 16. Wasihun AG, Dejene TA, Teferi M, Marugan J, Negash L, et al. (2018) Risk factors for diarrhoea and malnutrition among children under the age of 5 years in the Tigray Region of Northern Ethiopia. *PLoS One* 13: e0207743.
 17. Gizaw Z, Woldu W, Bitew BD (2018) Acute malnutrition among children aged 6-59 months of the nomadic population in Hadaleala district, Afar region, northeast Ethiopia. *Italian Journal of Pediatrics* 44: 21.
 18. World Health Organization (2019) Child growth standards: The WHO Multicentre Growth Reference Study (MGRS).
 19. Chen CM, Wu HE, Wang YY, Deng LN, Jia FM (2011) Nutritional Status of Children during and post-Global Economic Crisis in China. *Biomedical and environmental sciences: BES* 24: 321-328.
 20. Zhao SH, Lan ZY, Chen GH, Li X, Yao M (2013) Investigation on growth, development and anemia of preschool children in minority areas of Guizhou Province. *Journal of Guiyang Medical College* 38: 35-37.
 21. Chen R (2015) Analysis of nutritional status and influencing factors of children under 6 years of age in four counties of Gansu province from 2006 to 2009. Lanzhou University, Lanzhou.
 22. Du Plessis LM, Kruger HS, Sweet L (2013) Complementary feeding: a critical window of opportunity from six months onwards. *South African Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 3: S129-S140.
 23. Wang J, Wang H, Chang S, Zhao L, Fu P, et al. (2015) The Influence of Malnutrition and Micronutrient Status on Anemic Risk in Children under 3 Years old in Poor Areas in China. *PLOS ONE* 10: e0140840.
 24. Zangmo U, de Onis M, Dorji T (2012) The nutritional status of children in Bhutan: results from the 2008 National Nutrition Survey and trends over time. *BMC Pediatrics* 12: 151.
 25. Li XQ, Zhang WS, Liu Y, Wu GF, Yan XF, et al. (2013) Growth status of children under 7 years in Wuzhong City, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, China and its influential factors. *Chinese Journal of Contemporary Pediatrics* 15: 289-293.
 26. Zhou WY, Wang XL, Luo SS, Wang Y (2008) Study on stunting of children under 5 years of age in 50 counties of central and western China. *Chinese Journal of Child Health* 16: 265-267.
 27. Wang Y, He YH, Zhang QJ, Wang QY, Feng XL (2017) Analysis of influencing factors on growth retardation of children under 5 years of age in Jilin Province in 2013. *Journal of the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences* 39: 254.
 28. Capanzana MV, Aguila DV, Gironella GMP, Montecillo KV (2018) Nutritional status of children ages 0-5 and 5-10? years old in households headed by fisherfolks in the Philippines. *Archives of Public Health* 76: 24.
 29. Nagahori C, Tchuani JP, Yamauchi T (2015) Factors associated with nutritional status in children aged 5-24 months in the Republic of Cameroon. *Nursing & Health Sciences* 17: 229-235.
 30. Kinyoki DK, Berkley JA, Moloney GM, Kandala NB, Noor AM (2015) Predictors of the risk of malnutrition among children under the age of 5 years in Somalia. *Public Health Nutrition* 19: 1-9.
 31. Neima E, Henok A, Lamessa D (2017) Prevalence of Malnutrition and Associated Factors among Children in Rural Ethiopia. *BioMed Research International* 2017: 6587853.
 32. Asim M, Nawaz Y (2018) Child Malnutrition in Pakistan: Evidence from Literature. *Children* 5: 60.
 33. Ewusie JE, Beyene J, Ahiadeke C, Hamid JS (2017) Malnutrition in Pre-school Children across Different Geographic Areas and Socio-Demographic Groups in Ghana. *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 21: 797-808.
 34. Roy MP (2019) Malnutrition in children and its determinants: a study from east India. *Tropical Doctor* 49: 113-117.
 35. Horta BL, Santos RV, Welch JR, Cardoso AM, dos Santos JV, et al. (2013) Nutritional status of indigenous children: findings from the First National Survey of Indigenous People's Health and Nutrition in Brazil. *International Journal Equity Health* 12: 23.
 36. Mekonnen A, Jones N, Tefera B (2005) Tackling child malnutrition in Ethiopia: do the sustainable development poverty reduction programme's underlying policy assumptions reflect local realities? *Young Lives, Save the Children UK, London*.
 37. Kien VD, Lee HY, Nam YS, Oh J, Giang KB, et al. (2016) Trends in socioeconomic inequalities in child malnutrition in Vietnam: findings from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, 2000-2011. *Global Health Action* 9: 29263.
 38. Abdibari Ma'alain, Birhanu D, Melaku S, Tolossa D, Mohammed Y, et al. (2016) Magnitude and factors associated with malnutrition in children 6-59 months of age in Shinille Woreda, Ethiopian Somali regional state: a cross-sectional study. *BMC Nutrition* 2: 44.
 39. James P, Sadler K, Wondafrash M, Argaw A, Luo H, et al. (2016) Children with Moderate Acute Malnutrition with No Access to Supplementary Feeding Programmes Experience High Rates of Deterioration and No Improvement: Results from a Prospective Cohort Study in Rural Ethiopia. *PLOS ONE* 11: e0153530.
 40. Medhin G, Hanlon C, Dewey M, Alem A, Tesfaye F, et al. (2010) Prevalence and predictors of undernutrition among infants aged six and twelve months in Butajira, Ethiopia: the P-MaMiE birth cohort. *BMC Public Health* 10: 27.
 41. Schmidt MK, Muslimatun S, West CE, Schultink W, Gross R, et al. (2002) Nutritional Status and Linear Growth of Indonesian Infants in West Java Are Determined More by Prenatal Environment than by Postnatal Factors. *J Nutr* 132: 2202-2207.
 42. Zhao YL, Tao Y (2008) Research progress on the effects of water and sanitation on diarrhea. *Journal of Environment and Health* 25: 743-745.
 43. Jung YT, Hum RJ, Lou W, Cheng YL (2017) Effects of neighbourhood and household sanitation conditions on diarrhea morbidity: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *PLoS ONE* 12: e0173808.
 44. Baker KK, O'Reilly CE, Levine MM, Kotloff KL, Nataro JP, et al. (2016) Sanitation and Hygiene-Specific Risk Factors for Moderate-to-Severe Diarrhea in Young Children in the Global Enteric Multicenter Study, 2007-2011: Case-Control Study. *PLoS Med* 13: e1002010.