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Maternal and child nutrition

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[The Lancet Series](#) on maternal and child nutrition presents interventions for maternal and child nutrition, but is evidence synthesis adequate? Zulfiqar Bhutta and colleagues¹ make a few assertions that need to be clarified.

Although the use of multiple micronutrient supplements (MMS) during pregnancy is still a topic for debate, Bhutta and colleagues¹ have included it in the packages of nutrition interventions for cost-evaluations, ignoring the conclusions of the Cochrane review² asking for more evidence to guide a universal policy change while recommending replacement of iron-folate supplement with MMS.

Similarly, although the evidence in favour of ready-to-use therapeutic food in comparison with the standard care in the community-based management of severe acute malnutrition is weak in terms of reducing mortality, severe acute malnutrition management (which includes ready-to-use therapeutic food) is presented number one of the top ten interventions to reduce child mortality.

The authors also recommended folic acid supplementation for women of reproductive age with universal fortification of cereals

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and other foods; however an increase in the risk of colorectal cancer has been reported with increased folate intake during the early post-fortification period,³ and also a risk of delay in the diagnosis of vitamin B-12 deficiency with excess folate intake.⁴

Most of the interventions identified for modelling were based on products, and it is not clear why the modelling was not done for nutrition-sensitive interventions and interventions for disease prevention and management, especially when some of these were described as effective by the authors themselves.

We declare that we have no conflicts of interest.

References

¹ Bhutta ZA, Das JK, Rizvi A, et al. Evidence-based interventions for improvement of maternal and child nutrition: what can be done and at what cost?. *Lancet* 2013; **382**: 452-477. [Summary](#) | [Full Text](#) | [PDF\(819KB\)](#) | [CrossRef](#) | [PubMed](#)

² Haider BA, Bhutta ZA. Multiple-micronutrient supplementation for women during pregnancy. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2012; **11**. CD004905.

³ Zschäbitz S, Cheng TY, Neuhouser ML, et al. B vitamin intakes and incidence of colorectal cancer: results from the Women's Health Initiative Observational Study cohort. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2013; **97**: 332-343. [CrossRef](#) | [PubMed](#)

⁴ Sachdev HPS, Shah D. Folate. In: Kliegman RM, Spanton BF, St Geme JW, Schor NF, Behrman RE, eds. *Nelson textbook of pediatrics*. Philadelphia: Elsevier Saunders, 2012: 196-197.

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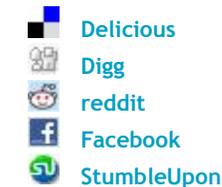
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