Prevention and Control of Malnutrition (International Malnutrition Task Force) Interventions
Task Force Report Form 2019

Task Force Chair/s

Joint Conveners:
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Task Force Members

Regional focal points and representatives:
South/Southeast Asia
Dr Tahmeed Ahmed, ICDDR, Bangladesh

Sub-Saharan Africa:
The late Professor David Sanders, University of the Western Cape, South Africa;
Dr Beatrice Amadi, University Teaching Hospital, Lusaka, Zambia.

Latin America:
Dr Ana Maria Aguilar, Medicina Universidad Mayor de San Andres, La Paz, Bolivia;
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Engagement with young professionals:
Dr Reggie Annan, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, Ghana.

Partner representatives:
Dr Paluku Bahwere, Valid International, UK;
Dr Sultana Khanum, Global SUN Civil Society Network, Bangladesh.
Summary of activities in 2019

The development of a platform for coordinated action on nutrition and cancer, which has been one of our major recent activities, has become a separate IUNS Task Force. Our other major activity is capacity building in relation to malnutrition.

Two papers resulting from a 2-year research project ‘Investigating the efficacy and effectiveness of Malnutrition eLearning course for global capacity building’ have been published.
We have continued to promote the Malnutrition eLearning course (now hosted by Virchow) through social media and other channels.

A new area that we are exploring relates to enhanced school feeding programmes as part of the essential package for healthy development of children and the fight against all forms of malnutrition.

Report of activities and achievements in 2019

1. Building capacity to prevent and treat malnutrition
We continue to build capacity among pre-service and in-service health professionals to prevent and treat malnutrition in the development context.

We are collaborating with colleagues in South Africa, Bolivia, Malawi, Ghana and Ethiopia to share experiences in scaling-up to national level improved management of severe acute malnutrition. A paper is in preparation using case studies to describe a variety of approaches used to scale-up improved inpatient treatment, lessons learned, and impacts achieved.

Our paper published in 2018 (Effectiveness of the Malnutrition eLearning Course for global capacity building in the management of malnutrition: Cross-country interrupted time-series study), has attracted a substantial number of citations. We showed that the Malnutrition eLearning course improved knowledge, understanding, and skills of health professionals in the diagnosis and management of children with severe acute malnutrition.

A companion paper entitled ‘Improved care and survival in severe malnutrition through eLearning’ has been published in Arch Dis Child 2019;105:32-39. We show that high quality, interactive eLearning can be effective in scaling up capacity building such that health professionals can manage children with severe acute malnutrition more effectively, leading to a reduction in mortality from 5.8% to 1.9%.
In Jamaica, the virtual absence of malnutrition has necessitated closure of the malnutrition ward at the Tropical Metabolism Research Unit and a refocusing of research activities to other health priorities. Professor Jackson helped the University of the West Indies mark this transition by organising a 2-day international meeting in September 2019 to a) celebrate the successes of TMRU, b) develop a forward-looking, externally-facing agenda.

2. Developing a platform for coordinated action on nutrition and cancer. This has been achieved in conjunction with IUNS, IAEA, IARC, the Union for International Cancer Control and World Cancer Research Fund International. As a result, a new IUNS Task Force ‘International Collaboration on Nutrition in relation to Cancer (ICONIC)’ has been formed and Professor Jackson has written a paper entitled ‘ICONIC: A global voice in nutrition and cancer’ highlighting the rationale and aspirations of the Task Force. This is to be published in Annals Nutr Metab.

3. Enhanced school feeding programmes. Professor Jackson joined a consultative workshop led by FAO to develop an interagency approach to school health and nutrition. Professor Jackson has also held discussions with academics and policy makers to explore possible avenues for future collaboration regarding school feeding and healthy development of children in low and middle-income countries.

Plan for the next year

To continue with capacity building activities re malnutrition, to explore further the needs and opportunities regarding school health and nutrition, and to participate in the 9th Africa Nutritional Epidemiology Conference (ANEC) to be held in Zambia.