



## Letter to the Editor

## Children mortality and malnutrition as a global issue

*Keywords:*

Deaths  
children  
time  
malnutrition  
Pakistan

Dear Editor,

We read with great interest the recently published paper “Hospital malnutrition in Latin America: A systematic review”. We believed this is an important issue in developing countries of Asia including Pakistan [1]. The term malnutrition is used generally for under nutrition as well as over nutrition, whereas the former exclusively refers to deficiency of nutrients. Undernutrition signifies being underfed resulting in severe underweight with respect to ones age as a result of deficiency of micronutrients in the food [2]. Approximately, 33 million people are at risk of malnutrition in Europe [3]. A condition known as severe acute malnutrition (SAM) causes mortality in children and impairs normal growth in those who survive. Globally, almost 20 million children under the age

of five suffer from SAM, among them about 1 million die each year. In six countries of Asia alone more than 12 million children are suffering from SAM which includes; 0.6 million in Bangladesh, 0.6 million in Afghanistan, 0.6 million in Yemen, 1.2 million in Indonesia, 1.4 million in Pakistan and 8.0 million in India [4].

Pakistan has been facing high rate of malnutrition from the past several decades [5]. Droughts in the recent past has further exacerbated the situation particularly in Tharparkar region of Sindh province [6]. In present letter we tend to highlight the severity of problem due to malnutrition in this region. In drought of 2011, 140 people died which includes mostly children; 139 deaths occurred in 2012 while in 2013, 196 deaths were reported [7]. In 2014, The death toll was 311 children in Tharparkar [8]. An estimated 670 children died in 2015 [9]. Total fatalities of children was reached 479 in 2016, while in 2017 the death toll touched 516 [10,11]. In 2018, the death figure reached 534 in Tharparkar [12]. This alarming situation has been depicted in Fig. 1. It is obviously beyond doubt that the reason for child morbidity and mortality is malnutrition. Non-nutritional factors identified which contributes to malnutrition were acute shortage of drinking water, scarcity of food and basic health services. To circumvent this situation it is imperative to formulate a multiprong strategy to address all these problems simultaneously.

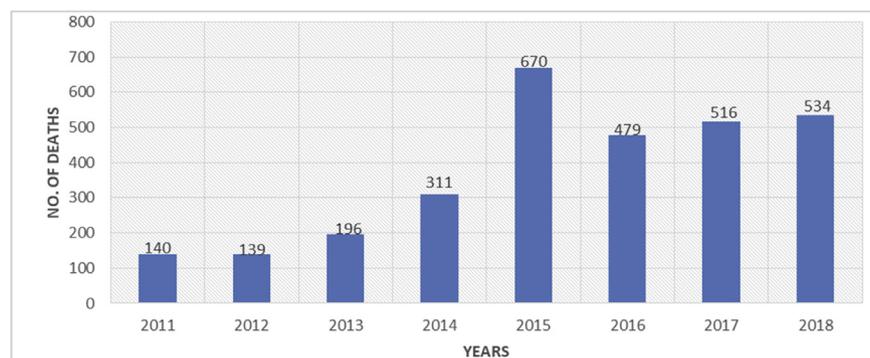


Fig. 1. Deaths toll due to Malnutrition in Pakistan (2011–2018), (2011–13; Overall deaths and 2014–18; Children deaths).

There should be a proper management system to provides health awarness, medical facility, nutritional counselling and unen-terrupted food supply to avoid infant deaths due to the malnutrition in near future.

#### Consent for publication

Not applicable.

#### Availability of data and materials

Not applicable.

#### Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest or financial disclosure about this publication.

#### Authors' contributions

AK and QR collected the data and wrote the letter following discussions with HA. HA revised the paper and improved the technical quality of the manuscript. All authors approved the final version of the paper.

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