

***The Lancet* Series on maternal and child nutrition: Countries will not break out of poverty unless malnutrition becomes a global priority**

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As leaders of the G8 group of nations prepare to meet for their annual summit, preceded by the UK and Brazilian governments co-hosting a high-level event on Nutrition for Growth, *The Lancet* publishes a new Series of papers on maternal and child undernutrition, providing startling new estimates of the numbers of children dying from malnutrition every year, and outlining how the persistent burden of malnutrition can be tackled, presenting the best evidence and latest developments in the field.

Click on the following links to read press releases for each of the Series papers:

- [Nearly half of all child deaths caused by malnutrition](#)
- [Analysis of nutritional interventions reveals ten ways to save 900 000 children's lives](#)
- [Global gains in nutrition will require improved nutrition-sensitivity of agriculture, child development, social safety nets, and education](#)
- [Building commitment and capacity for nutrition: time to act](#)

According to Professor Robert Black, of Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, USA, who led the Series, "Countries will not be able to break out of poverty or sustain economic advances when so much of their population is unable to achieve the nutritional security that is needed for a healthy and productive life. Our findings strengthen the evidence that good nutrition is a fundamental driver of a wide range of development goals, and while the impetus for improving nutrition today is stronger than ever, the costs of inaction are enormous."*

One of the most significant outcomes of the seminal publication of *The Lancet's* last nutrition Series in 2008 was the launch of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement, a policy framework emphasising the importance of a child's first 1000 days in nutrition, which provides a platform enabling leaders to pledge to intensify efforts to improve nutrition.

According to Professor Black, "The new evidence provided in the Maternal and Child Nutrition Series strengthens the case for a continued focus on the first 1000 days. Investments within this window can help meet crucial goals: the prevention of undernutrition, overweight, and poor child development outcomes with long-lasting effects on human capital formation. Because many women do not access nutrition-promoting services until month 5 or 6 of pregnancy, we draw attention to the need to ensure women enter pregnancy in a state of optimum nutrition."*

Dr Richard Horton, Editor-in-Chief of *The Lancet*, adds that: "What goes right and what goes wrong for fetal and child nutrition in the first 1000 days from conception to two years has lasting and irreversible consequences for later life. Undernutrition has a complex set of political, social, and economic causes, none of which are amenable to easy solutions that fit within the timeframe of a single political cycle, and for this reason, the outlook today for nutrition is not wholly good. However, the forthcoming Nutrition for Growth event in London and G8 leaders' summit present an immediate opportunity to foster

political support for the interventions – identified in this Series – that can be quickly scaled up or linked to nutrition programmes. If maternal and child nutrition can be optimised, the benefits will accrue and extend over generations, which is why we must work together now to seize this opportunity.”*

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<http://www.thelancet.com/series/maternal-and-child-nutrition>

For Series Executive Summary, see: <http://press.thelancet.com/nutritionexecutivesummary.pdf>

For introductory Comment, *Nutrition: a quintessential sustainable delivery goal*, by Richard Horton and Selina Lo, see: <http://press.thelancet.com/nutritioncommentintro.pdf>

For Series Comment, *Maternal and child nutrition: building momentum for impact*, by Lancet Maternal and Child Nutrition Study Group, see: <http://press.thelancet.com/nutritionseriescomment.pdf>

For Series Comment, *Global child and maternal nutrition – the SUN rises*, by David Nabarro, see <http://press.thelancet.com/nutritionSUNcomment.pdf>