Author's response to reviews

Title: Effect of daily versus weekly home fortification with multiple micronutrient powder on haemoglobin concentration of young children in a rural area, Lao People's Democratic Republic: a Randomized Trial

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Author's response to reviews: see over
RESPONSE TO COMMENTS FROM Reviewers

Manuscript Number: 1919577385523630

Manuscript Title: Effect of daily versus weekly home fortification with multiple micronutrient powder on haemoglobin concentration of young children in a rural area, Lao People's Democratic Republic: a Randomized Trial

Submitted to Nutrition Journal

The associate editor has the following comments: The authors should attend to the recommendations of both the reviewers? The comments from the last set of reviews and address them carefully.

Dear Associate editor,

Thank you very much for your recommendations. We did go through the comments from both reviewers carefully and response below.

Dear Dr. Donnen and Dr. Arlappa,

Thank you very much for your valuable time for revising the second draft of our manuscript and give positive comments. It is very much appreciated. We did going through your comments then revised accordingly on the manuscript. Below are point by point responses to the comments.

1. **Response to Reviewer: Philippe Dr Donnen**

**Version2: Date: 22 July 2011**

**Reviewer's report:**
The authors responded to the majority of my questions and changed the text accordingly.

Thank you very much for accepting our responses

**Minor revisions**
p25, L8: ref 42 and 43 are not present in the reference section!
p26, L1 same comments for references 44 and 45!

Thank you very much for this important point, we did go through the references and added the references in the references section accordingly

Iron supplementation improves appetite and growth in anemic Kenyan primary school

Table 3 p 44: A and B should be explained in footnotes

A. B Differences between groups are significant when letters are different (t test, P<0.05).

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.
Declaration of competing interests: no conflict of interest

Response to Reviewer: Dr. Arlappa

Version 2: Date: 13 July 2011

Reviewer's report:
The response/reply from the authors is satisfactory.

Thank you very much for your positive comments and satisfied with our responses.

Minor Revision
1. My previous query- “The authors need to explain how it is possible that there is increase in height, since increment in height needs longer duration. Similarly, authors need to explain why the weight of the children decreased over a time. The possible answer to the increment in height and decrease in weight could be the episodes of morbidity during the study period. The authors mentioned that 20 children had diarrhoea and 10 had Acute Respiratory tract Infection i.e. cough. These acute episodes of morbidity might have direct and immediate impact on weight than on height.

We would like to appreciate for this very good explanation for the discussion part of our study, we did add some explanation on this issue to the second sentence of first paragraph on page 25.

We observed that inadequate breastfeeding and weaning practices might contribute to high rates of malnutrition among study subjects as for general population in these age groups. Although the young children (age less than 24 months), 39.1% were already stunted. This high rate of stunting was similar to the prevalence found among children from the same age group in a 2006 national nutrition survey [13]. Overall, during the supplementation period an improvement was observed in height-for-age Z scores among three groups, but the effect of MMP was unclear. This may not be related with MMP supplementation because the change in height-for-age was smaller in the TWS group, but children in the daily group were similar to the control group. The decrease in weight for height Z scores might be because of the episodes of morbidity among study subjects during the study period. Acute episodes of morbidity might have direct and
immediate impact on weight than on height. Secondly, the lack of effect of MMP on weight may have been because the complementary foods consumed by the children were inadequate in energy; no additional complementary foods were provided to the families. Thirdly, it might be related to timing. If the trial period coincides with the period of dietary transition when the diet becomes more qualitatively deficient than quantitatively deficient, the results may be compromised [49].

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.
Declaration of competing interests: 'I declare that I have no competing interests'

We do hope this version can be accepted for publication in the Nutrition journal.

We look forward to your feedback.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Dr. Sengchanh Kounnavong