Reviewer's report

Title: Potential consequences of expanded MUAC-only programs on targeting of acutely malnourished children and ready-to-use-therapeutic-food allocation: lessons from cross-sectional surveys

Version: 0 Date: 15 Nov 2019

Reviewer: Belay Bancha

Reviewer's report:

I found that the paper has a significant contribution in correctly classifying and managing childhood acute malnutrition. However, the following concerns to be addressed before the paper is subject to publication.

✓ Your key words should appear just after abstract. No need to present word counts

✓ Line # 4-5 "...classification of cases into moderate or severe using the 115mm cut-off..." How a single cut-off used to diagnose both moderate and severe acute malnutrition?

✓ Line # 5-6 "...management of both moderate (MAM) and severe (SAM) cases of acute malnutrition...". I suggest MAM and SAM better to be abbreviated properly as they appear for the first time in the document and then after you are free to use them throughout.

✓ Line 64 # "...combining oedema and low WHZ...". Is it practically sound to have a child with both at a time?

✓ Line # 103-104 "Countries that had fewer than five surveys ... were exclude. Why?

✓ Line 105 # "...region was...". I suggest that it would be "...regions were..."

✓ Line # 111-117 better to be re-written.

✓ Line #126-127; 4) "Correctly Detected SAM" -- proportion of SAMall ... and WHZ ≥ -3)? Is that the case?

✓ Line # 186 "...important reduction..." to be paraphrased to convey the right message

✓ Line # 221-222, I have different idea that time to regain normal MUAC measurement is even longer given that it is muscle mass. Early discharge may not be a threat. Any argument?

✓ Line # 228 "...improve recovery and relapse..." I think the word improve in this context works for both recovery and relapse. If that is a case, to say "...improves relapse..." has
negative connotation. Unless I've mistakenly understood it, "...Improve recovery and prevent relapse..." would better explain the message.

✓ Line #253 "...low MUAC children are more at risk than the other SAM children." Think over inconsistent findings across the world.

✓ Line #322-326, You need to be more specific on the possible innovation that you are recommending.

General comments.

✓ Use correct punctuation where applicable, for instance line #227 "...outcomes Although..."

✓ From my experience you may format your List of Abbreviations in a continuous line using comma where applicable.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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