

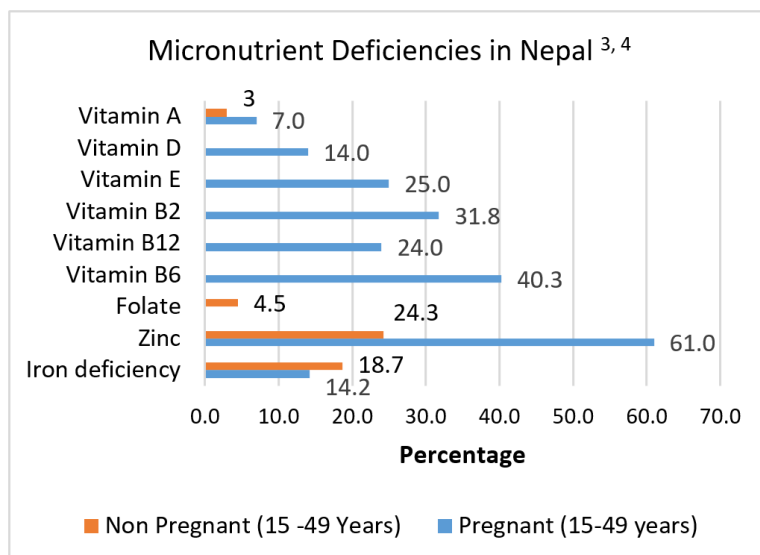
Breaking the Cycle of Micronutrient Deficiencies in Pregnancy: Landscape Analysis on Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation in Nepal

A project brief

Introduction

Pregnant women with micronutrient deficiencies are at greater risk of maternal mortality and their children are more likely to suffer from poor birth outcomes. Children born to mothers with micronutrient deficiencies are at higher risk of impaired cognitive and physical development. Multiple micronutrient deficiencies are common among pregnant women in low- and middle-income countries including Nepal. In Nepal, 12% newborns are reported to be born with low-birth weight, 9.3% estimated to be pre-term delivery, and 36% children stunted, 10% wasted, and 27% underweight¹. Similarly, neonatal mortality is reported at 21/1000 live births². Moreover, micronutrient deficiency persists at a high level in Nepal as bar chart.

Global evidence based on randomized controlled trials in different country settings, comprehensive reviews and meta-analyses have demonstrated a daily multiple micronutrient supplementation in pregnancy, as compared to iron and folic acid



supplementation (IFAS) alone, improves pregnancy outcomes including greater reduction in low birth weight, small for gestational age, and six-month mortality. This global evidence was contributed with the findings from randomized controlled trial conducted in Nepal itself. Findings from Nepal also showed that children born to mothers in the MMS group weighed heavier compared to children born to mothers in the IFA group.

Based on this evidence of benefits of MMS, it could be a possible solution to reducing micronutrient deficiencies amongst Nepali women and their children. A landscape analysis was conducted by Helen Keller International between September 2022 and March 2023 with the financial and technical support of Vitamin Angles.

Objectives

A landscape analysis was conducted with an aim to understand enablers and barriers to introducing and implementing an antenatal UNIMMAP-MMS program in Nepal.

¹ Nepal Demographic Health Survey, 2016

² Nepal Demographic Health Survey, 2016

³ Nepal Micronutrient Survey, 2017

⁴ Jiang et.al, 2005

