

SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING WITH READY-TO-USE THERAPEUTIC FOOD IN MALAWIAN CHILDREN AT RISK OF MALNUTRITION

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ABSTRACT

The study was a controlled, comparative clinical effectiveness trial of two supplementary feeding regimens in children at risk of malnutrition from seven centres in rural Malawi. Being at risk of malnutrition was defined as weight-for-height <85%, but >80% of the international standard. A stepped-wedge design with systematic allocation was used for assigning children to receive either ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) (n=331) or micronutrient-fortified corn/soy-blend (n=41) for up to eight weeks. The primary outcomes were recovery, defined as weight-for-height >90%, and the rate of weight gain. Children receiving RUTF were more likely to recover (58% vs 22%; difference 36%; 95% confidence interval [CI] 20-52) and had greater rates of weight gain (3.1 g/kg.d vs 1.4 g/kg x d; difference 1.7; 95% CI 0.8-2.6) than children receiving corn/soy-blend. The results of this preliminary work suggest that supplementary feeding with RUTF promotes better growth in children at risk of malnutrition than the standard fortified cereal/legume-blended food.

<http://www.icddrb.org/images/jhpn2304-Supplemental-Feeding.pdf>