A Community-Based Program to Reduce the Prevalence of Severe and Moderate Acute Malnutrition Among Children in Sauri, Kenya

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Prevalence of Malnutrition

- **Global Prevalence**
  - One of leading causes of death for children under 5
  - 35-55% of childhood deaths

- **Prevalence in Kenya**
  - Wasting - 7.0% of children under 5 (low weight-for-height)
  - Stunting - 40.7% of children under 5 (low height-for-age)
Impact of Chronic Malnutrition on Child Health

- Long-term Impact
  - Impaired physical and cognitive growth
  - Compromised immunity, higher risk of disease
  - Impaired organ functioning
  - Chronic under-nutrition in utero
  - Reduced school attendance
  - Reduced social participation
Limitations to Current Provision of Healthcare

- Distance to clinics
- NRU: minimum length of stay is 2 weeks
- 24-hour supervision required
- Other household responsibilities
- Under-resourced clinics
- Low expectations of clinical care
- Fear of Western medicine
- Lack of awareness of severity of illness
- Illness of parent
Proposed Solution: Community-based Therapeutic Care (CTC)

- Home-based care
- MUAC
- Provision of food
- Active case finding
- Increased coverage
- Preventative care
- Community mobilization
- Appropriate for rural health
Research Aims:

(1) Assess baseline knowledge, attitudes and beliefs towards SAM
(2) Assess capacity and willingness of community members to adopt CTC
(3) Identify the daily activities and struggles faced by mothers, CHWs that impact the provision of care
Qualitative Research Methods

- **Focus Groups**
  - CHWs
  - Mothers
  - Women’s Groups

- **In-Depth Interviews**
  - Nutritionists
  - Physicians
  - Traditional Healers

- **Direct observation**
  - Household visits
  - Community observations
Findings: What causes malnutrition?

- Lack of food
- Lack of diversified diets
- Lack of breastfeeding
- Introduction of complementary foods early
- *Chira* (witchcraft)
- Cursed child
- Conjugal land rights
- Laziness of mother
- Early marriages
Findings: Health-Seeking Behavior

- Where should mothers take their children?
  - Clinic
  - Hospital
  - CHW

- Where do you take your child?
  - Traditional Healer
  - Jalemo (church groups)
  - Grandparents
Next steps: Training Mothers

Knowledge
- Diet
  - Teach mothers ways to diversify meals
- Breastfeeding
  - Explain importance of exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months
- Introduction of complementary foods
  - Teach mothers when and how to introduce foods

Resources
- Support groups (new mothers, experienced mothers)
- Womens’ microfinance groups
Thank you!