
NUTRITION MATTERS
DEWORMING REDUCES ANEMIA IN NEPAL
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Dear colleagues;

In Nepal, anemia affects 78% of children 6-59 months old; the high prevalence of intestinal parasite infections has also been documented. The national vitamin A program in Nepal reaches over 90% of children 6-59 months old twice yearly (April and October) through a community-based strategy that involves about 50,000 female community health volunteers. In 1999, UNICEF led the integration of deworming into the national vitamin A program so as to ensure that all children 12-59 months old receive 400 mg of albendazole bi-annually when they are supplemented with vitamin A.

An evaluation conducted in four districts revealed that: a) The prevalence of helminth infection decreased from 39% (baseline) to 29% (after 1st round) and then to 22% (after 2nd round); b) The prevalence of anemia decreased from 47% (baseline) to 29% (after 1st round) and then to 11% (after 2nd round); this is a 77% reduction in the prevalence of anemia after only two rounds vitamin A + deworming rounds. Currently, the program covers 100% of districts in Nepal and has proven to be cost-effective and sustainable: a) cost-effective because - after initial training - drug procurement is the only cost (estimated at 2 cents/child/year); b) sustainable because although initially the deworming drugs (albendazole) were provided by UNICEF, today all deworming drugs are procured by the Ministry of Health. Child deworming is another Nepali success story.

Attached: Nepal's deworming program: drastically reducing young child anemia.
Blomquist PO. UNICEF Nepal.

ENJOY! (... and share with your colleagues and counterparts).

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Health, Education, Equality, Protection
ADVANCE HUMANITY
