



Statement on Anthropometric Measurements of Admission to Nutrition Treatment Debate

February 2016 // As an operational organization with a clear mandate to increase treatment coverage for severe acute malnutrition (SAM) by 2020, we recognize that the simplest and quickest way to detect severe acute malnutrition is to check a child's mid upper arm circumference (MUAC). However, despite the simplicity of this tool, the coverage of severe acute malnutrition treatment remains low and must be improved significantly.

It is crucial to consider the operational dimension of tools and models promoted to increase the coverage and reach of severe acute malnutrition treatment, especially in the current intervention context, which is increasingly integrating treatment services into health systems. This is also essential to ensure community engagement and participation in the referral and follow up of affected children.

We therefore welcome the new scientific debate on nutritional anthropometric measurements for the administration of treatment for severe acute malnutrition. Additional, context-specific evidence is needed to ensure continuous understanding and application of existing practice to increase coverage of treatment of severely acutely malnourished children.

The current debate calls for exploring new dimensions of anthropometric measurements, such as looking at a wider range of MUAC thresholds and pursuing new research on alternative, practical and simple tools to detect severe acute malnutrition. However, unless a more appropriate, practical and simple tool is proposed and tested, Action Against Hunger will continue to use and promote MUAC in specific contexts.

We are committed to support initiatives investigating and testing new and alternative measurements to treat all children affected by severe acute malnutrition.