



REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

**MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

# INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF NEONATAL & CHILDHOOD ILLNESS



**2023**

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## 1.0 KEY INFORMATION ON CHILD HEALTH IN THE GAMBIA FROM 2017 TO OCTOBER 2023

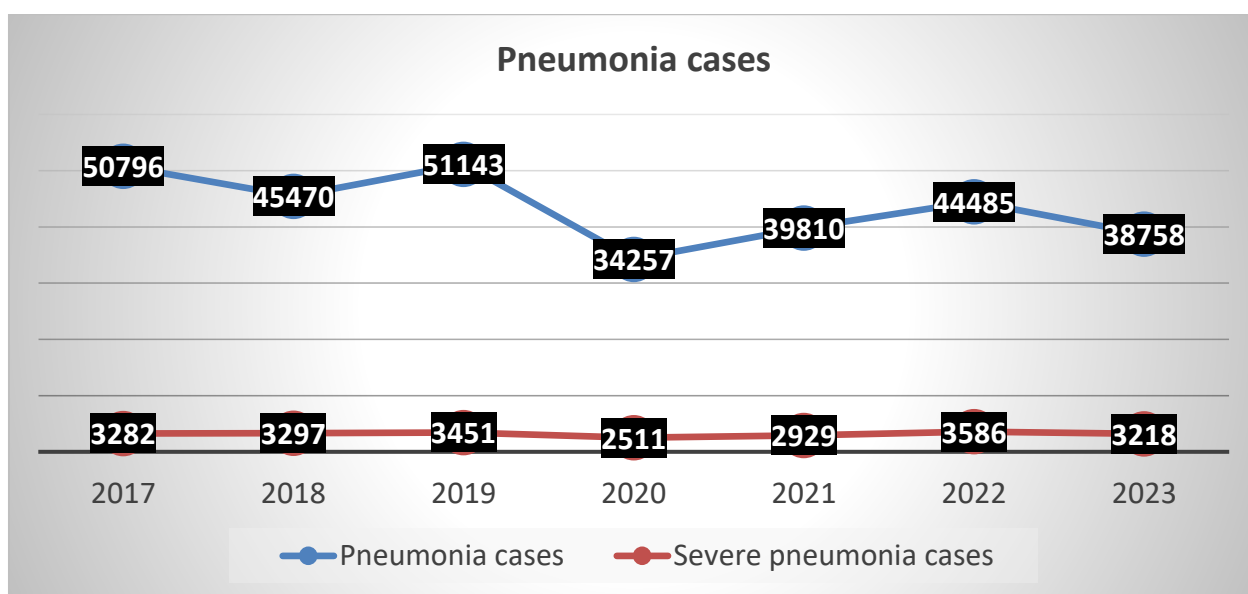
### 1.0.0 Introduction

Information on child health and survival can help policymakers and programme managers assess the efficacy of current strategies, formulate appropriate interventions to prevent deaths from childhood illnesses, and improve the health of children in The Gambia. This write-up presents information on morbidity and mortality of children less than 5 years on Pneumonia, Diarrhea, malnutrition and anaemia from 2017 to 2023 respectively.

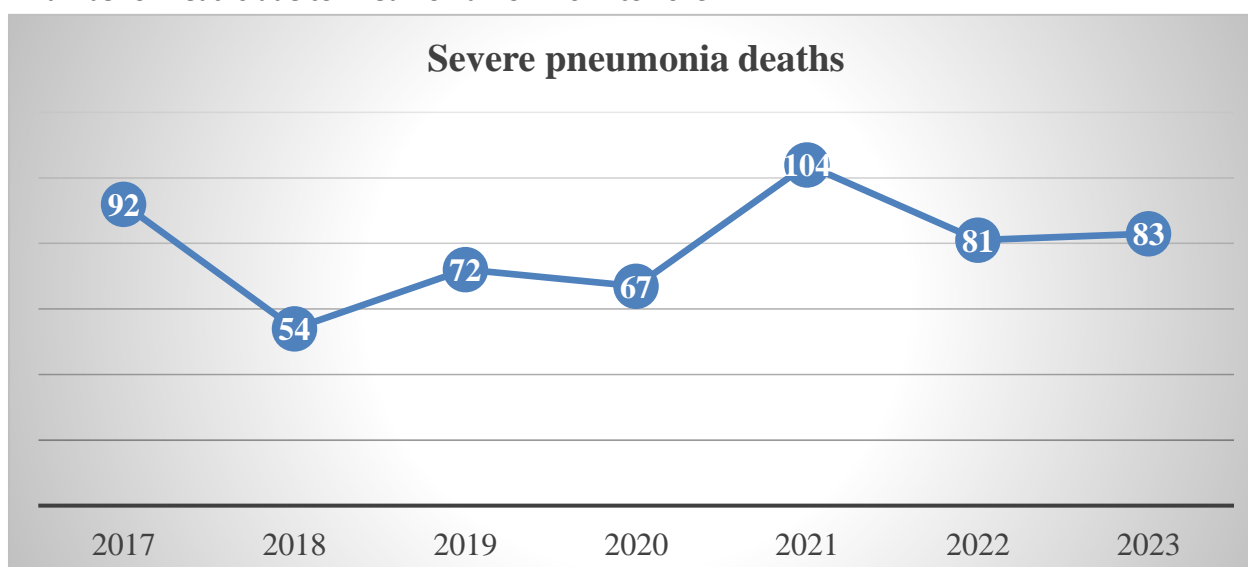
### 1.2 ACUTE RESPIRATORY INFECTION (ARI)/PNEUMONIA

Acute respiratory infection (ARI)/Pneumonia is one of the leading causes of childhood morbidity and mortality in The Gambia and throughout the world. For the period under review (2017 – 2023), reported pneumonia cases were highest in 2019 (51143) and lowest in 2020 (34257). The drop in the number of cases in 2020 can be attributed to the COVID 19 Pandemic. Severe pneumonia cases were highest in 2022 (3586) followed by 2019 (3451), 2018 (3297), 2017 (3282), 2023 (3218), 2021 (2929) and 2020 (2511) respectively. In addition, Deaths due to severe pneumonia was highest in 2021 (104) cases and lowest in 2018 (54) indicating an unsteady curve in the number of severe pneumonia deaths.

Number of Pneumonia cases reported from 2017 to 2023.



Number of Deaths due to Pneumonia from 2017 to 2023

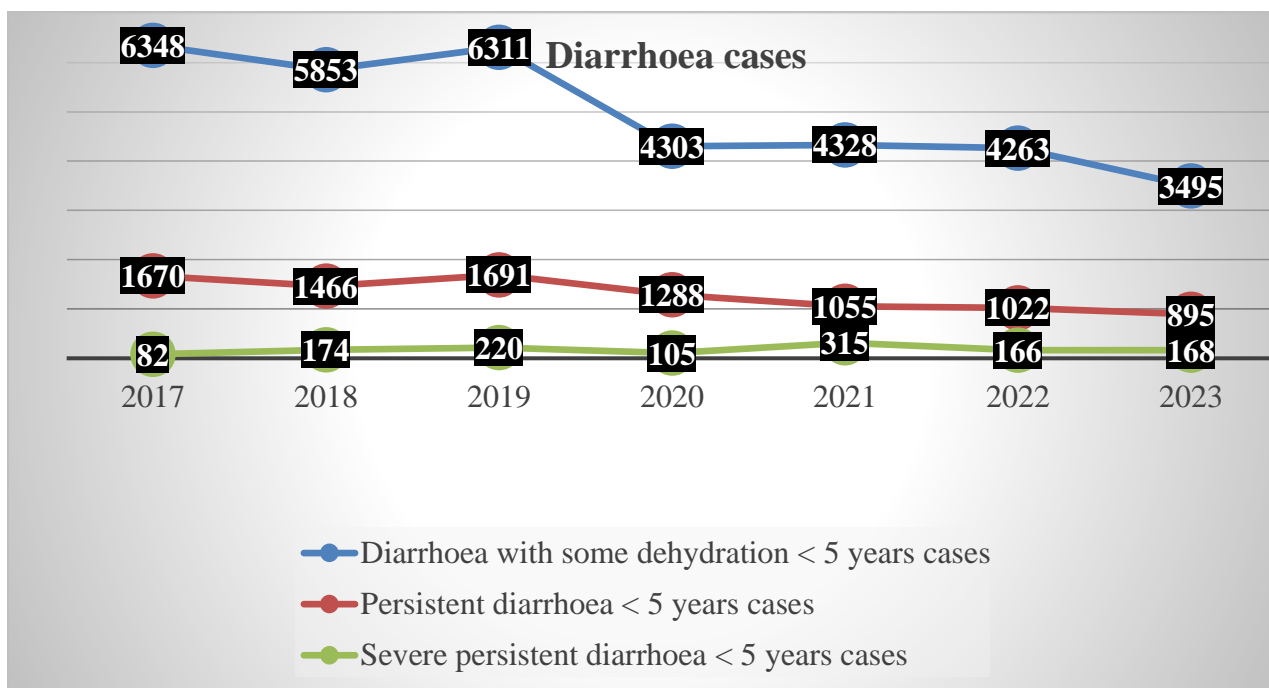


### 1.3 DIARRHEA

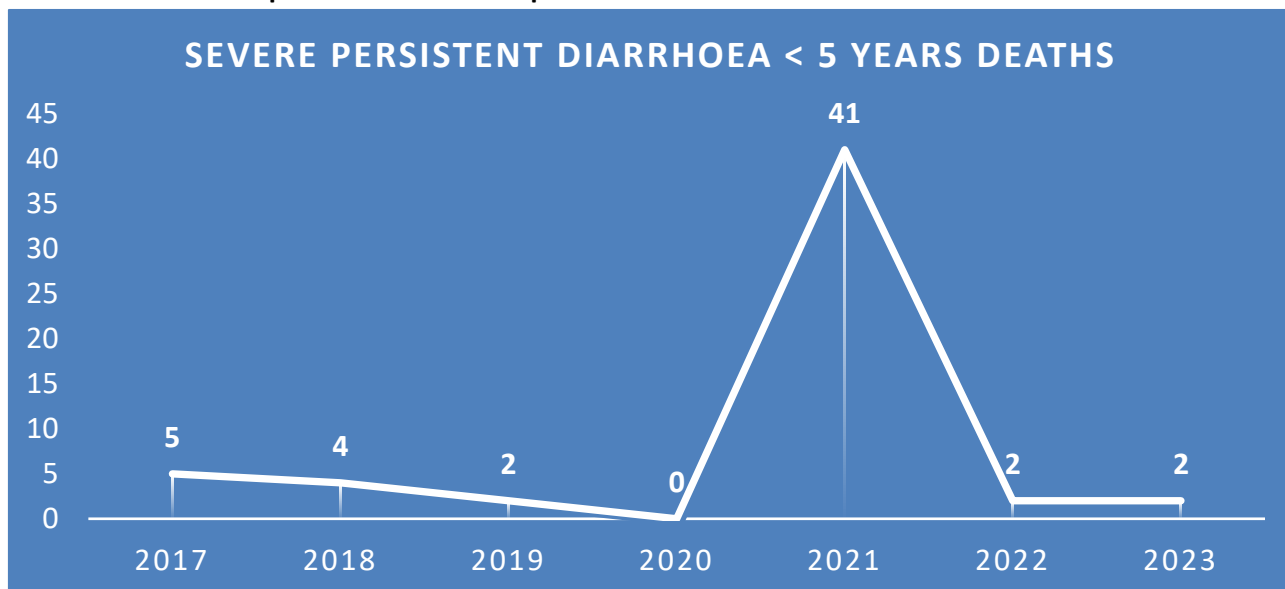
Diarrhoea is a common childhood illness than can lead to dehydration and death if not properly treated. The condition can be easily treated with oral rehydration therapy (ORT). Exposure to diarrhoea-causing pathogens is frequently related to consumption of contaminated water and to unhygienic practices in food preparation and disposal of excreta. The combination of high cause-specific mortality and the existence of an effective remedy makes diarrhoea and its treatment a priority concern for health services.

Data recorded in the DHIS2 on diarrhea amongst children less than five illustrated that diarrhea for some dehydration was highest in the year 2019 (6311) and lowest in 2023 (3495) cases. A similar trend was registered for persistent diarrhea, (1691) in 2019 and (895) in 2023. Severe persistent diarrhea was highest in 2021 (315) and lowest in 2017 (82) respectively. Number of deaths reported due to severe persistent diarrhea from 2017 to 2023 was highest in 2021 (41) and lowest in 2020 (0). The data reported may not be a true representation, due the fact that COVID 19 pandemic hit hard in the same year (2020) and lot of parents and care givers were not reporting to health facilities for treatment which has the potentials to gross under reporting as some diarrheal deaths might occur at home.

**Number of Diarrhea cases reported from 2017 to 2023**



**Number of deaths reported due to severe persistent diarrhea from 2017 to 2023.**



## 1.4 MALNUTRITION

Malnutrition is a health condition resulting from eating food that contains either insufficient or too many calories, carbohydrates, vitamins, proteins or minerals. It is a state of under- or overnutrition, evidenced by a deficiency or an excess of essential nutrients. Good nutrition is the basic need for children to thrive, grow, learn, play and participate. The effects of malnutrition in children under the age of 5 years include underweight, stunting, wasting with or without oedema (previously known as marasmus and kwashiorkor, respectively) and even death. Malnutrition is the most severe consequence of food insecurity amongst children under the age of 5 years. Acute malnutrition can lead to morbidity, mortality and disability, as well as impaired cognitive and physical development with an increased risk of concurrent infections.

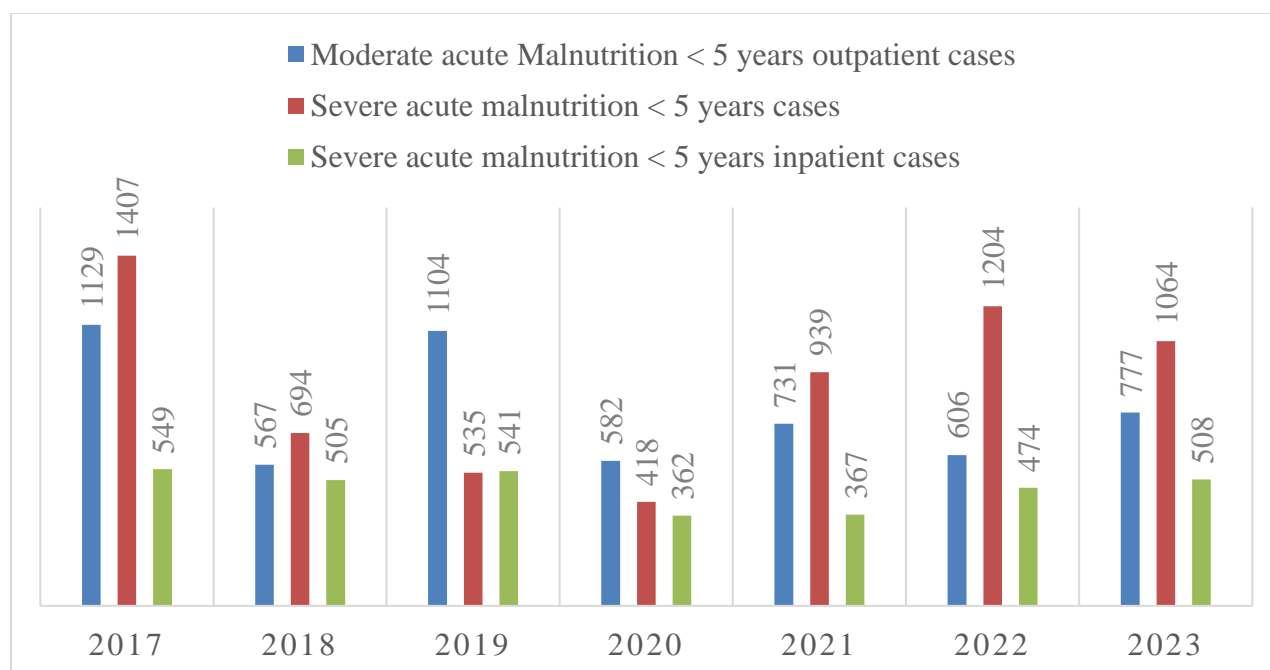
In this write-up, we looked at the Number of malnutrition cases reported from 2017 to 2023 in the DHIS2 for both moderate acute malnutrition < 5 years outpatient, severe acute malnutrition < than 5 years and severe acute malnutrition < 5 years inpatients.

Severe acute malnutrition outpatient cases were highest in 2017 (1407) and lowest in 2020 (418) cases. Moderate acute malnutrition was highest in 2017 (1129) and lowest in 2018 (567). Severe acute malnutrition < 5 inpatient cases was highest in 2017 (549) and lowest in 2020 (362). The data for 2020 may not be representational as some measures like lock down policies, and other measures to stop the spread to the repositioning of health care facilities to manage cases of COVID 19 to reduce demand because of patients afraid of infections might have played a critical role.

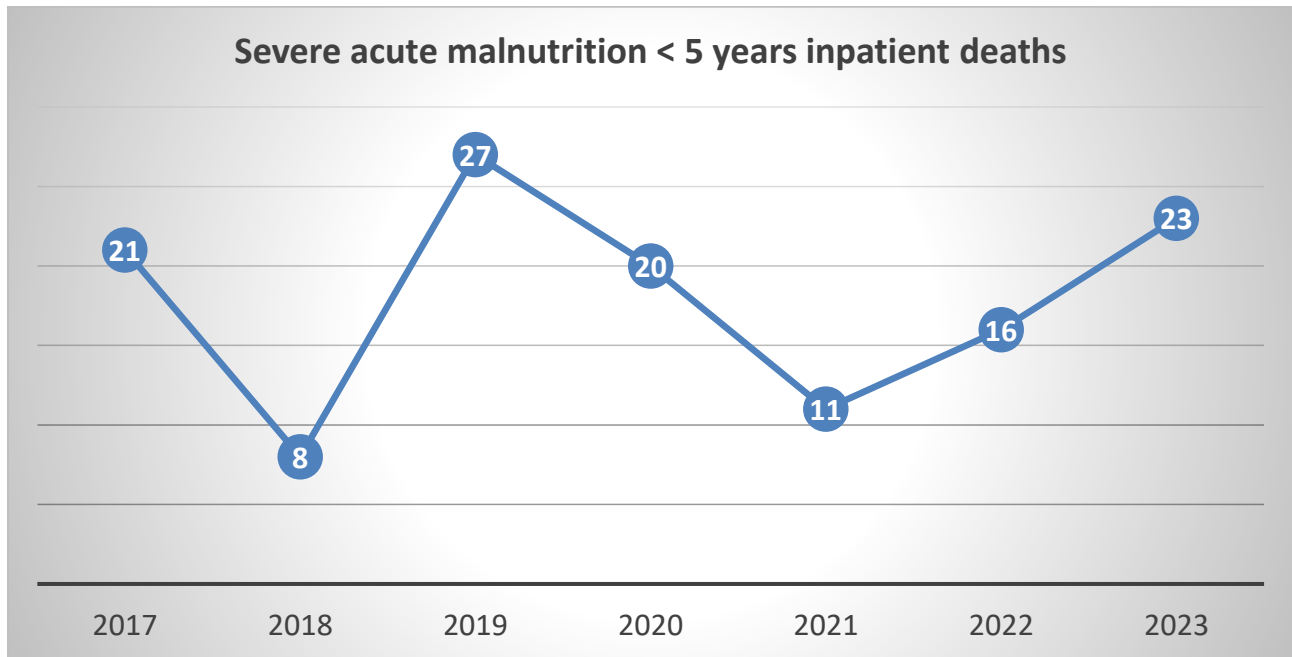
Severe acute malnutrition inpatient deaths were highest in 2019 (27) followed by 2023 (23), 2017 (21), 2020 (20), 2022 (16), 2021 (11) and 2018 (8) respectively.

The prevalence of stunting and wasting is not routinely collected in the DHIS2 platform; thus, the current baseline is as outlined in the GDHS 2019-2020 (stunting 18% and wasting 5%).

### Number of malnutrition cases reported from 2017 to 2023.



**Deaths due to Malnutrition from 2017 to 2023**

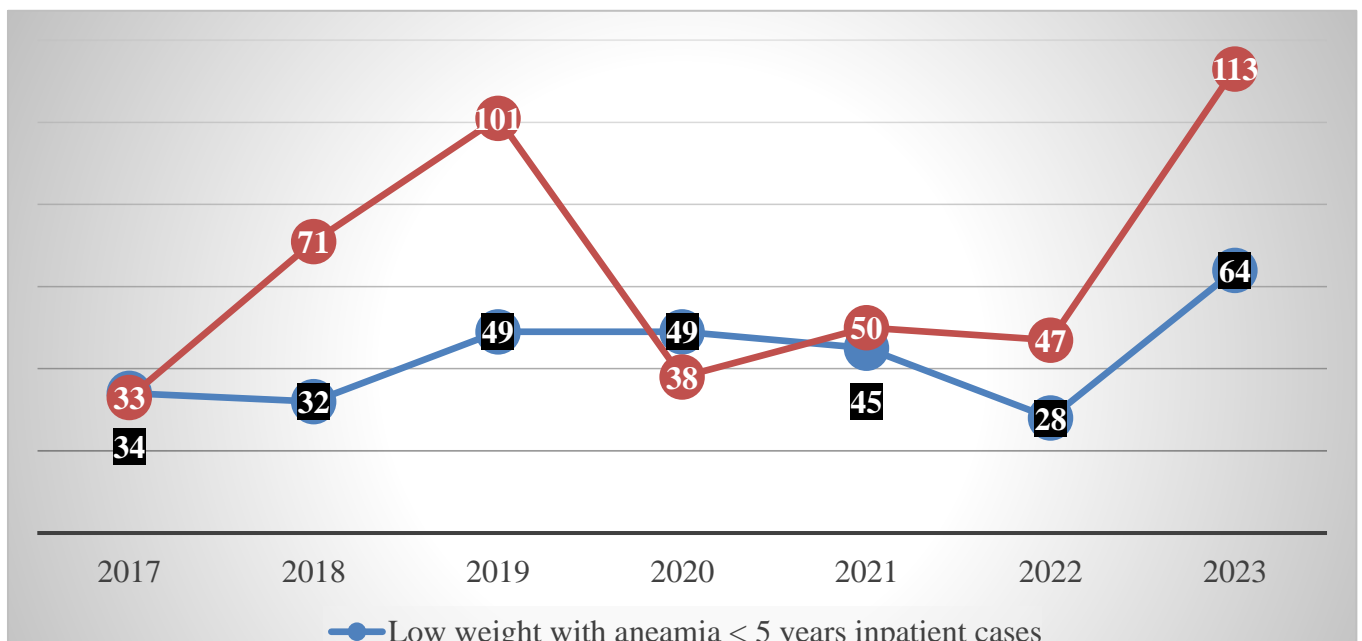


**1.5 ANAEMIA**

Anaemia, defined as a reduced level of haemoglobin in the blood, decreases the amount of oxygen reaching the tissues and organs of the body and reduces their capacity to function. Anaemia is associated with impaired motor and cognitive development in children. The main causes of anaemia in children are malaria and inadequate intake of iron, folate, vitamin B12, or other nutrients. Other causes of anaemia include intestinal worms, haemoglobinopathy, malnutrition and sickle cell disease.

Looking at the DHIS2 service data provided below, low weight with anaemia for children less than 5 years who were admitted, was highest in 2023 (64) and lowest in 2022 (33). This data is likely to change come end of year as we still have two more months to go.. However, deaths due to low weight with anaemia less than 5 years was highest in 2017 (4) and lowest in 2022 (1), followed by 2018, 2020 and 2021 (2) respectively; while 2019 and 2023 registered (3) deaths.

**The number of Anaemia cases reported from 2017 to 2023.**



### Deaths due to Anaemia from 2017 to 2023

