While poverty and socioeconomic inequity remains an important factor, in many cases, the presence of micronutrient deficiency is a factor of diet quality

Global Nutrition Epidemiology and Trends
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Key insights
Possible strategies to combat high morbidity (e.g. stunting and underweight) and mortality in malnourished children include promotion of breastfeeding, dietary supplementation of micronutrients, prevention of protein-energy malnutrition, and hygiene of available weaning foods. Interventions that depend on strong health systems or behavioral changes appear to be stalled and need to be re-examined to find more effective ways of delivery.

Current knowledge
Infectious diseases including diarrhea often coexist with micronutrient deficiencies and lead to the vicious cycle of malnutrition and infections. Emerging data from community intervention trials provide evidence that implementing intervention strategies that combine appropriate infant and young child feeding with micronutrient interventions at scale are tangible and could lead to an alleviation of malnutrition.

Practical implications
Effective, packaged delivery of proven interventions and ensuring universal coverage could prevent about one quarter of child deaths under 36 months of age and reduce the prevalence of stunting at 36 months by about one third.

Recommended reading

Prevalence data (2011) of stunting (upper panel) and underweight (lower panel). Reproduced with permission from Stevens et al. [31].