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Subject: Non-breastfed indicator

Posted by [Marie McGrath](#) on Wed, 13 Mar 2019 10:28:51 GMT

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I propose a 'non-breastfed' indicator is included as a standard indicator in DHS. This should be reported for infants at six months of age, at 1 year and at 2 years. The current indicators are designed to describe the attributes of a breastfeeding population. However, it is also critical to know what proportion of infants are not breastfed in a population. This is a particular issue that has compromised humanitarian responses in countries where BMS use is more common, such as in Syria, Yemen and Iraq. Operational guidance on infant feeding in emergencies, endorsed by the World Health Assembly, recommends that non-breastfed infants also need protection and support. Lack of DHS data to help quantify the caseload for targeted support greatly impedes planning and means these high risk infants lack visibility. While continued breastfeeding rate at 1 year and 2 years of age provides this information indirectly, it is rarely interpreted as such but only in breastfed infant terms. Also, there is often misinterpretation of the exclusive breastfeeding indicator amongst non-IYCF specialists, whereby 'not exclusively breastfed' is interpreted as 'not breastfed'. Including a non-breastfed indicator would help correct this. Data to calculate a non-breastfed indicator will already be available from what is currently routinely collected. So the request is just to calculate and present the indicator.

To declare my interest and experience in this, ENN coordinates an international interagency collaboration on infant and young child feeding in emergencies (IFE Core Group), since 2004 and manage the development and support uptake of the Operational Guidance referred to above. We closely engage with operational partners on the realities of implementation and act to advocate on and address critical gaps.

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