

## Effects of Early Childhood Malnutrition on Cognitive Development in Later Life, a Review of the Literature

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**Introduction:** Childhood malnutrition causes the mortality of millions of children under five and affects the health and development of millions of other children. In particular, cognitive development may be negatively affected by early childhood malnutrition.

**Background:** Early childhood is a critical period for both nutrition and cognitive development. Malnourished children are more likely to experience educational failure and a reduction in adult productivity. Malnutrition and its effects on cognitive development can be prevented by nutritional and early childhood development interventions. This review aims to explore whether malnutrition has negative effects on cognitive development and if these effects can be reversed.

**Methodology:** A comprehensive literature review was conducted. Criteria were set to establish the viability of studies according to sampling, statistical robustness, length of the study and the appropriateness of the measures used.

**The results:** Early childhood malnutrition has negative effects on cognitive development in childhood and adolescence but can be partially or fully reversed by appropriate interventions.

**Conclusion and recommendations:** To prevent these adverse effects the interventions need to focus first and foremost on children aged 0-2 years old; this can be more cost effective. Parents should be included in the interventions, and cultural and environmental context should be considered.

### Biography:

Shaqieq Ashrafi Dost graduated as a Medical Doctor. She has more than 10 years' work experience in public health mostly in the field of mother and child health. She was also given the responsibility of nutrition programmes in her organization which made her able to establish Baby Friendly Hospital Initiatives (BFHI) in two Provincial hospitals in Afghanistan. A breast-feeding programme was another nutrition programme that she started in three provinces. She did her master's programme in Public Health at Bournemouth University, UK. Currently she is doing her PhD programme in Health Management at the same University.