



# As the Standard Milk and Peanut Paste–Based Formulation for the Treatment of Severe Acute Malnutrition in Children: A Non-Inferiority Individually Randomized Controlled Efficacy Clinical Trial in Malawi

Steve Collins\*

Standingford House, Oxford, OX4 1BA, UK

## Editorial

At the recent Food Assistance for Nutrition Evidence Summit (June 27<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>) in Washington D.C., Dr Steve Collins, a medical doctor and the originator of the UN endorsed model of care for Acute Malnutrition - Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) – presented inspiring results relating to a new recipe of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) which is made from readily available local ingredients. Dr Collins is the Founder and Chairman of VALID Nutrition ([www.validnutrition.org](http://www.validnutrition.org)) – an Irish-based charity and social enterprise involved in the manufacture and development of highly innovative and effective ready-to-use foods in Malawi. The Research presented was originally published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition in August 2017 and is titled “Soya, maize, and sorghum–based ready-to-use therapeutic food with amino acid is as efficacious as the standard milk and peanut paste–based formulation for the treatment of severe acute malnutrition in children: A non inferiority individually randomized controlled efficacy clinical trial in Malawi.”

Given the length of time that has passed since publication, Dr Collins spoke candidly about his scepticism and frustration at the “glacially” slow pace of approval of innovative and superior products to treat acute malnutrition. According to Collins, this ground-breaking product is designed to treat and prevent Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and has the capacity to treat approximately 1 million additional children per annum within existing budget thresholds. It is the outcome of 14 years of research and development (largely funded by State donors/taxpayers) and has several superior benefits to the existing recipe for treating SAM, including: significantly lower cost (15% to 25%); is superior at addressing anaemia; has a far better sustainability profile; is easier to produce in developing countries/regions where these products are needed; is both lactose and nut free, and contains less sugar.

Dr Collins openly stated that, “It is scandalous that a product with several critical advantages and high quality scientific evidence to support it can be blocked because of bureaucracy and vested interests.” He challenged those empowered to make room to allow this recipe to be used, and to act now. Doing so, he argued, will immediately lower the cost of treatment and allow hundreds of thousands more children to be treated within existing aid budgets.

Acute malnutrition remains a major public health problem in developing countries. In 2016 globally, 52 million children fewer than 5 suffered from acute malnutrition including 17 million from severe malnourishment according to UNICEF. Globally, only about 20% of SAM cases are being reached, leaving millions of children with a greatly increased risk of death. A significant contributing factor to the low coverage is the high cost of RUTF. To reduce cost and improve coverage, developing alternative lower cost recipes that are at least as efficacious in treating SAM as the existing standard RUTF formulation, is essential. Development of such recipes has therefore been a top research priority in the Global Development sector for the past 10 years, especially with the treatment of SAM being a UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG).

VALID Nutrition has been working to develop effective non-milk-based recipes for more than a decade and during this period has completed three clinical (Efficacy) Trials involving the innovative Soya, Maize and Sorghum (SMS) based RUTF recipe. Producing therapeutic foods locally out of local grains and pulses has long been a goal of international research and development efforts.

## OPEN ACCESS

### \*Correspondence:

Steve Collins, Standingford House,  
Oxford, OX4 1BA, UK,  
E-mail: [steve@validinternational.org](mailto:steve@validinternational.org)

Received Date: 05 Oct 2018

Accepted Date: 19 Nov 2018

Published Date: 21 Nov 2018

### Citation:

Collins S. As the Standard Milk and Peanut Paste–Based Formulation for the Treatment of Severe Acute Malnutrition in Children: A Non-Inferiority Individually Randomized Controlled Efficacy Clinical Trial in Malawi. *Ann Nutr Food Sci.* 2018; 2(6): 1036.

Copyright © 2018 Steve Collins. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Non-milk formulations reduce dependency on imported milk, make better use of locally grown ingredients, decrease the risks of fungal (aflatoxin) contamination, reduce lactose intolerant reactions to the treatment and lower the carbon footprint, all for a lower cost. Given the scientific evidence available to permit the introduction of this

welcome development, Collins admits to being shocked as to why this is not happening, and questions whether “such a scandalous waste of resources would be tolerated in other sectors?”