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PRESS RELEASE

**Micronutrient deficiency study is
a 'wake-up call', says IADSA**

IADSA has developed a new *Mind the Gap* resource highlighting the shocking findings of a scientific review exposing the true extent of global malnutrition.¹ The study, published in *The Lancet*, revealed that more than half of preschool-age children and over two thirds of non-pregnant women of reproductive age worldwide have a micronutrient deficiency.

In '[Wake-up Call: Experts sound the alarm over micronutrient deficiencies](#)', IADSA explains the key conclusions from the study and explores how best to address the issues raised.

The researchers looked at data for deficiencies in iron, zinc and vitamin A in preschool-age children, and iron, zinc, and folate in non-pregnant women of reproductive age. The burden of deficiency in at least one micronutrient was 56% for children and 69% for women. Levels of malnutrition were at their worst in the developing world but were also widespread in high-income countries.

The researchers focused on preschool-age children and women of reproductive age for their analysis because there is enough global data for these population groups. Insufficient data exists for other groups, including school-aged children, adolescent boys, men, pregnant women, and older adults.

The review was led by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and the Micronutrient Forum (MNF). Following publication, GAIN and MNF said there was now an "urgent" need for action.² They also said the findings suggested the widely held belief that there are 2 billion people globally suffering with a micronutrient deficiency is likely to be a "major underestimate".

Among measures identified by GAIN and MNF to address the problem were fortification of food with vitamins and minerals, and supplementation programmes targeting pregnant women and young children.

Cynthia Rousselot, IADSA's Director of Technical & Regulatory Affairs, commented: "The significance of this review cannot be overstated. It

¹ Stevens, G. A., Beal, T., et al. Micronutrient deficiencies among preschool-aged children and women of reproductive age worldwide: a pooled analysis of individual-level data from population-representative surveys. *The Lancet Global Health* 2022; 10: e1590-99

² <https://www.gainhealth.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/new-global-estimates-for-hidden-hunger.pdf>

indicates that micronutrient deficiencies are more widespread than we originally feared. Malnutrition can result in health and developmental problems and reduced educational outcomes. It is up to all of us to find ways to address this hidden hunger, including better integration of supplement programmes into nutrition and health policy.”

Based in London, IADSA is the international association of the food supplement sector, with members from six continents. IADSA is the global platform to guide the evolution of policy and regulation in the sector. Visit iadsa.org for more information.

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About IADSA

Established in 1998, IADSA is an international body comprising member associations and companies operating in the global supplements sector. Bringing together food supplement associations from six continents, IADSA is a trusted source of information and runs regional and national regulatory, scientific and technical programmes in many parts of the world, supporting and advising governments and other stakeholders in relation to the development and implementation of regulation and policy. IADSA also works with companies and authorities to build national associations in countries where they do not already exist. IADSA’s full name is International Alliance of Dietary/Food Supplement Associations.