INTRODUCTION:
Severe acute malnutrition (SAM) defined by a very low weight for height (below –3z scores of the median WHO growth standards), is a devastating public health problem of epidemic proportions. It is one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in childhood. Children with severe malnutrition are at risk of several life threatening problems like hypoglycemia, hypothermia, serious infections and severe electrolyte imbalance. (1),(2),(3).

Malnourished children suffer in greater proportion from respiratory infections, infectious diarrhea, measles, and malaria, characterized by a protracted course and exacerbated disease.(4),(5),(6),(7). Sepsis in patients with severe acute malnutrition may not always be associated with classical signs of infection such as hyperthermia, diarrhea, respiratory illness, urinary tract infections or with non obvious signs of infections such as hypothermia, poor oral acceptance, hypoglycemia are included in the study. Patients were divided into groups on the basis of presence or absence of clinical parameters and analysed. Results and conclusion: Of the parameters included in our study, decreased oral acceptance was the most commonly associated parameter which was present in 54.16 percent of the study population. Blood cultures were positive in 41.66% of the patients. Followed by others parameters which were less commonly involved like diarrhea (34.72%), hurried breathing (26.38%), fever (20.83%) and edema (5.55%) indicating that sepsis in patients with severe acute malnutrition may have diverse presentations and associations and may not necessarily be associated with classical signs of infection.

MATERIAL AND METHODS:
In this study 72 children aged 6 months-60 months, classified as SAM children as per WHO criteria were admitted in pediatrics ward with obvious signs of infections such as hyperthermia, diarrhea, respiratory illness, urinary tract infections or with non obvious signs of infections such as hypothermia, poor oral acceptance, hypoglycemia are included in the study. Children aged below 6 months and above 60 months and whose parent/patient not giving consent were excluded.

Definition: The assessment of nutritional status as per WHO guidelines is done according to:
1. Weight for Height (length)
2. Height (or length) for Age, and

As per the WHO Classification, SAM is defined as a score of less than -3 SDS (standard deviation score) where SDS is defined as the deviation of the value for an individual from the median value of reference population divided by standard deviation of standard reference population.

Patients were divided into groups on the basis of presence or absence of clinical parameters like:
1) Edema
2) Hurried breathing
3) Diarrhea
4) Fever
5) Decreased oral acceptance
6) Blood culture results.

And outcome was observed and compared.

OBSERVATIONS AND RESULTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDEMA</th>
<th>Death (n=3)</th>
<th>% Death</th>
<th>Discharge (n=69)</th>
<th>% discharge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>94.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE - 1 Edema and outcome

Correlation of EDEMA and outcome

Dr raja goswami
Senior resident, NSCBMC, jabalpur

Dr Alfia A Sami
Senior resident, NKPSIMS Nagpur.

Dr Avyact Agarwal
Assistant professor NSCBMC jabalpur
TABLE - 2 Hurried Breathing and Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hurried Breathing</th>
<th>Death (n = 3)</th>
<th>% Death</th>
<th>Discharge (n=69)</th>
<th>% discharge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>75.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE - 3 Diarrhoea and Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diarrhoea</th>
<th>Death (n = 3)</th>
<th>% Death</th>
<th>Discharge (n=69)</th>
<th>% discharge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>63.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>36.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

TABLE - 4 Fever and Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fever</th>
<th>Death (n = 3)</th>
<th>% Death</th>
<th>Discharge (n=69)</th>
<th>% discharge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21.7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

TABLE - 5 Decreased Oral Acceptance and outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decreased Oral Acceptance</th>
<th>Death (n = 3)</th>
<th>% Death</th>
<th>Discharge (n=69)</th>
<th>% discharge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>47.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) Edema was present in 4/72 patients (5.55%). Of the patients died none had edema and only 5.8% (4/69) of the discharged patients had presence of edema on admission.(p>0.05)

2) Hurried breathing was present in 19/72 (26.38%) of our study population. Patients who died 66.67% (2/3) had complaint of hurried breathing on admission, whereas 24.6% (17/69) of patients in discharge group had hurried breathing on admission.(p>0.05)

3) Diarrhea was present in 25/72 (34.72%) of our study population indicating diarrhea to be a commonly associated problem in patients with SAM. In the patients died none had complain of diarrhea on admission in comparison to discharge group where 36.2% (25/72) of patients were admitted for complain of diarrhea.(p>0.05)

4) Patients who died none was admitted for complaint of fever, but in the discharge group 21.7% (15/69) of patients had fever on admission.(p>0.05)

5) 39/72 (54.16 %) of our study population had a poor oral acceptance on presentation. Patients that died all 100% (3/3) were admitted for complaint of decreased oral acceptance, whereas in discharged patients 52.2% (36/69) had decreased oral acceptance.(p>0.05)

6) Coming the outcome of patients with respect to cultures, in our study of the total number of deaths, 66.7% (2/3) were culture positive and 33.3% (1/3) were sterile. In discharged patients, 40.6% (28/69) were culture positive and 59.4% (41/69) had their culture results as sterile. Reed et al9 (1996) found in their study the case fatality rate for bacteraemic children was (22.6%) significantly greater than in those without bacteraemia (9.3%).

DISCUSSION:

Edema was present in 4/72 patients (5.55%). All the patients who had edema had a favourable outcome in our study and were discharged. Hurried breathing was present in 19/72 (26.38%) of our study population. 2/19 (10.52%) of the patients with hurried breathing had an unfavourable outcome as compared to 1/53 (1.88%) who did not had hurried breathing indicating that hurried...
breathing could be regarded as an unfavourable sign in patients with SAM. Diarrhea was present in 25/72 (34.72%) of our study population indicating diarrhea to be a commonly associated problem in patients with SAM. Out of the 25 patients with diarrhea, none had an unfavourable outcome. Fever was present in 15/72 (20.83%) of our study population. Patients who died none was admitted for complaint of fever, but in the discharge group 21.7% (15/69) of patients had fever on admission (p > 0.05). 39/72 (54.16%) of our study population had a poor oral acceptance on presentation. All the patients who had an unfavourable outcome in our study had decreased oral acceptance. Coming the outcome of patients with respect to cultures, in our study of the total number of deaths, 66.7% (2/3) were culture positive and 33.3% (1/3) were sterile. In discharged patients, 40.6% (28/69) were culture positive and 59.4% (41/69) had their culture results as sterile. Reed et al. (1996) found in their study the case fatality rate for bacteraemic children was (22.6%) significantly greater than in those without bacteraemia (9.3%).

Of the parameters included in our study, decreased oral acceptance was the most commonly associated parameter which was present in 54.16 percent of the study population. Blood cultures were positive in 41.66% of the patients. Followed by others parameters which were less commonly involved like diarrhea (34.72%), hurried breathing (26.38%), fever (20.83%) and edema (5.55%).

CONCLUSION:
Of the parameters included in our study, decreased oral acceptance was the most commonly associated parameter which was present in 54.16 percent of the study population. Blood cultures were positive in 41.66% of the patients. Followed by others parameters which were less commonly involved like diarrhea (34.72%), hurried breathing (26.38%), fever (20.83%) and edema (5.55%) indicating that sepsis in patients with severe acute malnutrition may have diverse presentations and associations and may not necessarily be associated with classical signs of infection.

REFERENCES:
1. World Health Organisation  Department of child and adolescent Health development Management of the child with serious infection or severe malnutrition Guidelines for care at the first referral level in developing countries. WHO/FCH/CAH/00.