**In SSA severe wasting of infants 0-5 months is most prevalent in the humanitarian crisis countries of Somalia and DRC**

By Rachael Nagaddya, 21st August 2025.

Severe wasting also known as severe acute malnutrition is the most lethal form undernutrition and one of the top threats to child survival. Defined as low-weight-for-height that is less than -3 standard deviation and a mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) less than 115 mm, it is caused by a lack of nutritious food and repeated bouts of diseases such as diarrhoea, measles and malaria, which in turn compromise a child’s immunity.

In infants less than 6 months, severe wasting is defined by low weight-for-length or the presence of bilateral pitting oedema. It is often associated with higher mortality in these young infants than in older infants and children. In addition to low birth weight, severe wasting of these children is an indication of suboptimal feeding practices, especially breastfeeding practices. Data shows that severe wasting is not only prevalent in Somalia and Democratic republic of Congo, countries facing humanitarian crises but also in relatively stable countries such as Uganda.