

Factors Associated with Stunting among Children Aged 0-59 Months in South Asia: A Systematic Review

Munia Afroz

Center for Non-communicable Diseases and Nutrition (CNCDN)
BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health (BRAC JPGSPH), BRAC University

Co-authors: Sakib Rahman¹; Fahmida Akter¹; Abu Ahmed Shamim¹; Malay Kanti Mridha¹

¹CNCDN, BRAC JPGSPH, BRAC University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

RATIONALE/OBJECTIVE

- Childhood stunting leads to vicious cycles of poverty and inequality across generations by boosting the risk of poor health outcomes, hampering educational achievements, and hindering economic productivity in adulthood.
- **Objective:** To identify factors associated with stunting among 0-59 month-old children in eight South Asian countries.

METHODS

Study area and population: Among 0-59-month-old children in South Asian countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka).

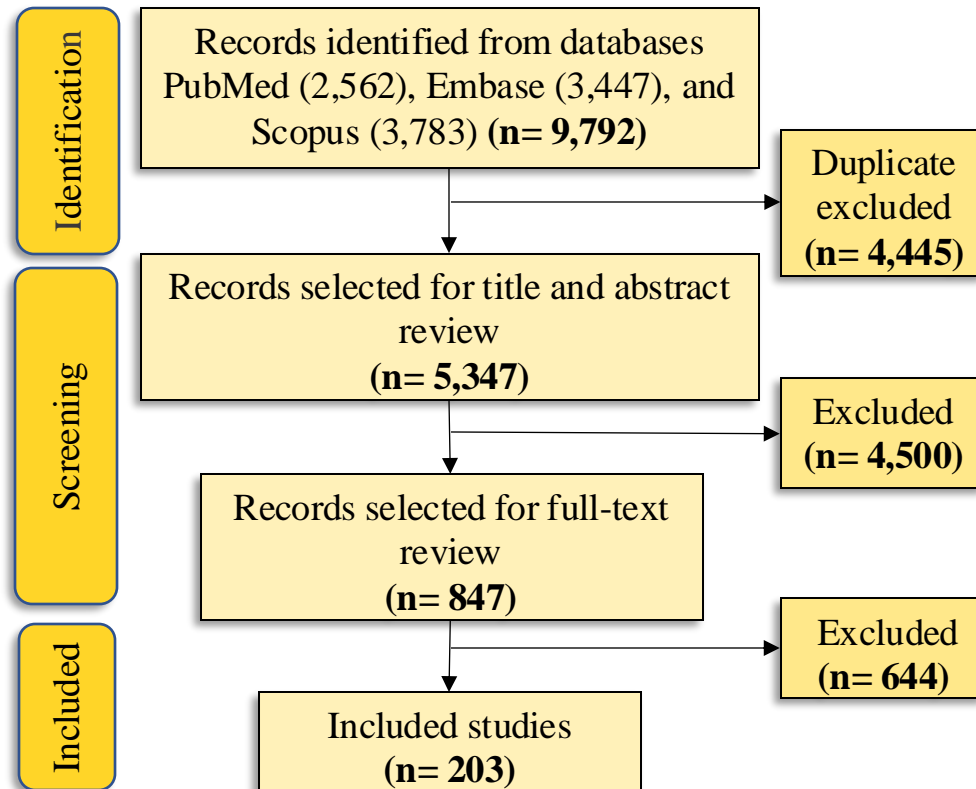


Fig 1: PRISMA flow diagram for database search of studies

RESULTS

We reviewed 203 full-text articles. Among those, 19 were multicountry studies and others were national or sub-national studies from Afghanistan (1), Bangladesh (63), Bhutan (2), India (77), Maldives (0), Nepal (18), Pakistan (20), and Sri Lanka (3).

Types	Individual factors	Parental factors	Household factors	Distal factors
Most reported factors	Age of children (79) Sex of children (44) Infant and Young Child Feeding practices (42) Birth order of the child (28)	Maternal education (87) Maternal body mass index (39) Maternal height (26) Paternal education (24) Maternal age (22) Maternal age at childbirth (15)	Household wealth (89) Cast/ethnicity (22) Religion (20) Household drinking water (18)	Geographical location (36) Place of residence (36)
Less reported factors	Availability of childcare support (1) Child's length (2) Twin child (3)	Paternal age (1) Paternal BMI (1) Mother's nutrition knowledge (1) Paternal occupation (3)	Sex of household head (2) Household air pollution (3)	National economy (2) Seasonality (3)

IMPLICATIONS

Understanding the variation and similarities in factors associated with stunting in 0-59 month-old children throughout South Asia will help create better prevention and control programs to attain stunting-related SDG targets.