

Minutes of the Amendment Explanation

Article: Effectiveness of Nutrition Interventions for Children Aged 36-59 Months in a Suburban Preschool in Hanoi, Vietnam

Dear Editors and Reviewers

We sincerely thank the reviewers for their valuable and constructive comments provided over multiple rounds of review. We are truly grateful for these insightful suggestions, which have significantly improved the quality and academic rigor of our manuscript.

We have carefully and thoroughly revised the entire manuscript in response to all comments, addressing each point with great attention and seriousness. We highly appreciate the opportunity to improve our work through this rigorous review process.

We would also like to express our strong interest in publishing our work in *Discover Public Health*. We greatly value the journal's reputation and are impressed by its transparent and systematic peer-review process. We sincerely hope to have the opportunity not only to publish this manuscript but also to contribute further research to the journal in the future.

We respectfully submit below our detailed point-by-point responses to the reviewers' comment

No	Feedback	Edit feedback
Reviewer 1's feedback		
1	As authors now realized that the impact seems likely be due to the ONS (increases in energy, protein and calcium), and not home or diets provided at school. It is still unclear how the education component as provided to parents was effective. Therefore, the policy implication of recommendation for further use of the results from this study should be carefully crafted	We thank the reviewer for this insightful comment. We agree that the observed improvements are likely largely attributable to the oral nutritional supplementation (ONS). The manuscript has been revised to reflect this interpretation more clearly, with more cautious wording throughout. We also acknowledge that the independent contribution of the education component was not specifically evaluated and should be interpreted with caution. The policy implications have been accordingly refined to adopt a more cautious tone
2	What was the reason for reported only the intake of calcium, and not other micronutrients, especially, iron?	We thank the reviewer for this important comment. Although multiple micronutrients, including iron, were estimated from the dietary

		data, this study focused on selected nutrients (energy, protein, and calcium) that were most directly related to growth outcomes and showed the most consistent changes across groups. This clarification has been added to the Methods section.
3	The use clinical signs which are very subjective, and misdiagnosis seem clear if the deficiencies are not severe. Further, as authors also agreed that the clinical signs are not specific to micronutrient deficiencies for children at this age. Thus, interpretation of the effectiveness of the intervention appears to be on the overall improvement of child nutritional status based on anthropometry, and to a certain extent on Hb improvement, despite being measured by the non-invasive tool as in this study.	We thank the reviewer for this important comment. We agree that clinical signs are subjective and not specific to micronutrient deficiencies, particularly in young children. This limitation has already been acknowledged in the manuscript, where we clarify that clinical signs should be interpreted with caution and considered as supportive rather than primary indicators of intervention effectiveness. The interpretation of results has been aligned accordingly, with greater emphasis on anthropometric outcomes and hemoglobin changes
4	Part of the second paragraph under 2.1, and first paragraph under 2.3 can be merged to remove redundancy. The information seems to be best fit under 2.3	We thank the reviewer for this helpful suggestion. We have revised the manuscript to remove redundancy by consolidating the description of class-level allocation under Section 2.3 (Sample Size and Sampling Method), while retaining key information on sample size and sampling procedures. The corresponding text in Section 2.1 has been streamlined accordingly.
5	Second paragraph on the Rad—67 Pulse CO-Oximeter: It is unclear if testing of the agreement between this tool against CBC was only performed for the cases that showed clinical signs of anemia. The current description is as if the validity of this tool was also performed, and if so, the methodology as described is not adequate for a validity test. Alternatively, simply remove this paragraph, and retain the explanation if	We thank the reviewer for this important comment. We have revised the manuscript to clarify that venous blood samples for complete blood count (CBC) were collected only in children with suspected anemia based on SpHb screening and clinical assessment. These measurements were used for clinical confirmation rather than for formal validation of the non-invasive device. The description has

	this comparison was done only for cases with clinical signs of anemia.	been simplified accordingly to avoid misinterpretation
6	For all nutrients referred to in the MS, please use English (e.g., Table 2 – it should be calcium, not calci; List of micronutrients/other information about the ONS in the Supplementary table).	We thank the reviewer for this helpful comment. We have revised the manuscript to ensure that all nutrient names are consistently presented in English throughout the tables and supplementary materials (e.g., “calcium” instead of “calci”). The corresponding corrections have been made accordingly.
7	An observation unrelated to the objective of this study, protein intake appears to be already high even at baseline – almost 2g/kg/d (vs FAO/WHO recommendation of 0.9 g/kg/d). Interesting to see that this is similar to that reported in the study - SEANUTS 2 in Vietnam. (no need to respond to this observation, but just an interesting observation that authors may wish to further explore). b. Was lunch and ONS provided by school – if promoted, who will bear the costs – school, government, etc.?	We thank the reviewer for these helpful observations. We appreciate these insights and have noted them for consideration in future research and discussion