

The WHO/UNICEF “generic” IMCI guidelines were originally designed to address the most common causes of mortality in children age 1 week up to 5 years old, especially in countries with high under-5 mortality.

In these situations, there is often a substantial incidence of communicable diseases in children under-5 taken to primary health care facilities, and risk factors such as malnutrition and low birth weight are common.

The generic version of the guidelines therefore concentrates on the outpatient management of the common childhood conditions such as acute respiratory infections, including pneumonia, diarrhoeal diseases, malaria, in addition to common neonatal conditions.

WHO has also developed a version for high HIV settings.

The generic guidelines need to be adapted in countries, to take into consideration local epidemiology, existing policies, drug resistance patterns, essential medicines availability, feasibility of implementation through the existing health system, and local terminology used in communities to refer to common illness entities. Recommendations on foods and fluids also need to be adapted.

WHO has developed tools to guide the adaptation process.

The guidelines need also to be periodically reviewed and updated. For this purpose, WHO has published a technical update for further adaptations.

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