

# Child Wasting and Severe Wasting, 2024

Global and regional evidence with an Experimental Daily-Equivalent USU Pilot Estimate

WSI-CW-JME-2024-01 | One-day equivalent burden rate | P1 - early illustrative mapping

| SOURCE EVIDENCE                           | EXPERIMENTAL WSI ESTIMATE     | MAPPING RANGE                      |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 42.8 million children affected by wasting | 55.9 million USU/day globally | 27.9-83.8 million USU/day globally |

### What this number means

This is an Experimental USU Pilot Estimate. WSI applies approved intensity and, where relevant, duration assumptions to public source data, then expresses the modeled burden relative to a defined six-hour kidney-stone pain reference. The range is deterministic, not a confidence interval.

### The result in plain language

Severe wasting contributes 44.4% of central modeled daily burden despite accounting for about 28.5% of the global wasting total.

Child wasting tests how a common daily burden framework handles a prevalence state with an explicitly severe subgroup.

### What the source reports

12.2 million affected by severe wasting

Source: UNICEF / WHO / World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates. Geographic scope: Global and four printed regional groups. Time basis: 2024 prevalence estimates.

### What WSI models

WSI derives moderate wasting by subtracting severe wasting from aligned total counts, then applies separate one-day intensity scenarios to the moderate and severe states.

What the model adds

- Separates moderate and severe wasting within a common daily-equivalent unit.
- Shows the disproportionate modeled contribution of the severe state.
- Tests a regional application while preserving the limitations of rounded source values.

How to read the estimate

| Element                     | Public interpretation                                                                             |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Central estimate            | 55.9 million USU/day globally                                                                     |
| Deterministic mapping range | 27.9-83.8 million USU/day globally                                                                |
| Time basis                  | One-day equivalent burden rate                                                                    |
| Mapping maturity            | P1 - early illustrative mapping                                                                   |
| Mortality treatment         | Mortality is excluded from USU; the JME prevalence tables do not supply a comparable death total. |

What should not be inferred

- The result is a one-day equivalent rate, not an annual cumulative burden.
- The official regional values are rounded as printed, especially affecting small regions.
- The P1 mappings are early illustrative assumptions, not child-reported or clinically validated suffering scores.
- Mortality, medical complications, future developmental loss, and caregiver suffering remain outside USU.

**Portfolio comparison warning**

This result should not be ranked directly against the other WSI pilot series unless their time basis, population, source construct, and mapping maturity are sufficiently aligned. Current cross-series ordering is not authorized.

*Full research report and technical methods are available at [worldsufferingindex.org](https://worldsufferingindex.org).*