

# Drivers of anaemia persistence among children and women of reproductive age in the Sahel

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**The Sahel faces high undernutrition and anaemia prevalence for decades, despite the substantial investment in nutrition programming. Aim:** to identify drivers of the anaemia burden among children and women of reproductive age (WRA) in Sahelian countries, through a systematic mapping review.

## Methods

Evidence was gathered from publications identified by a search syntax in scientific databases, hand-searches of grey literature, and citation tracking. Studies published in English or French up to December 2022 and including data from the Sahel were considered for publication after full-text screening against predetermined eligibility criteria. Drivers were coded according to the UNICEF/Young conceptual framework of malnutrition<sup>1-3</sup>. Twenty-one publications focused on anaemia drivers (n=9 children; n=7 WRA and n=5 both populations) were analysed.

## Results

Each major category of undernutrition drivers was reported by approximately two-thirds of the publications.

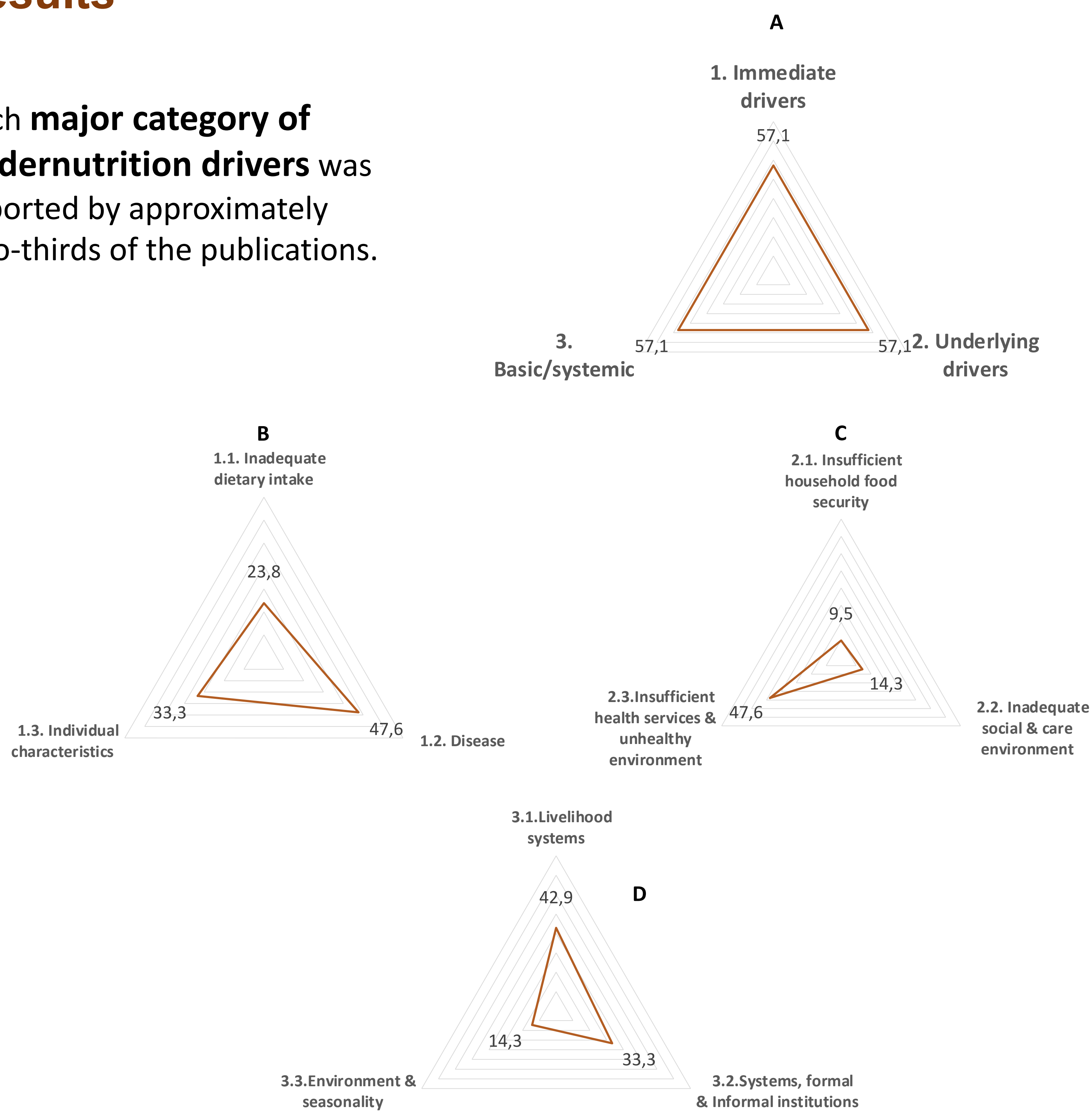
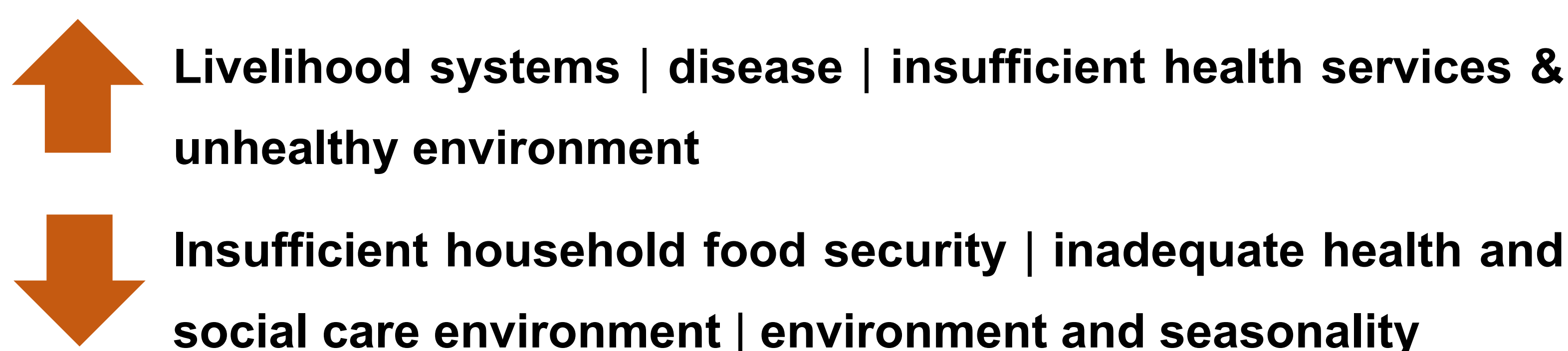


Figure 1. Frequency of reported anaemia driver categories (A) and subcategories (B, C, D).



This study was conducted in the scope of a wider systematic review on the drivers of undernutrition (anaemia, stunting, wasting) in the Sahel. The findings led to the design of a proposed framework of the undernutrition drivers specifically in this region, based on the UNICEF/Young framework<sup>1-3</sup> (Figure 2).

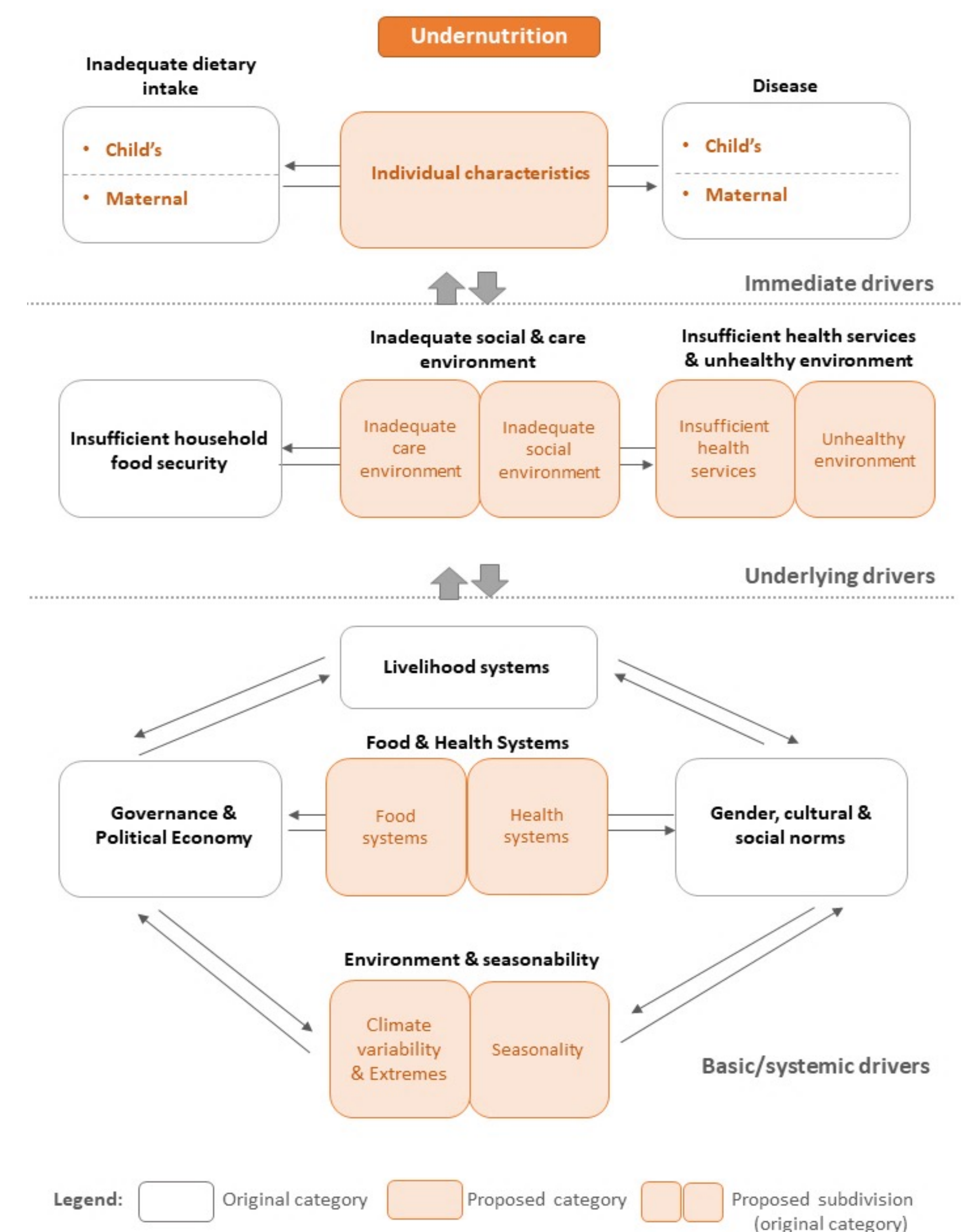


Figure 2. Proposed framework of drivers of undernutrition in the Sahel.

- References
- UNICEF (1990) *Strategy for improved nutrition of children and women in developing countries*. New York, NY, USA.
  - UNICEF (2020) *United Nations Children's Fund. (UNICEF). Nutrition, for Every Child: UNICEF Nutrition Strategy 2020–2030*. New York, USA.
  - Young H (2020) *Nutrition in Africa's Drylands: A Conceptual Framework for Addressing Acute Malnutrition*. Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.

## Conclusion

- There is a need for research and public health prioritisation of issues identified as critical in the Sahel, (e.g., food insecurity, environment, seasonality, conflicts and shocks) → underlying and basic/systemic drivers.
- More robust evidence may sustain a recommendation for implementing Interventions covering these topics in the Sahel, to improve the health of children and WRA, namely decreasing the anaemia prevalence.