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Nutritional deficiency contributes substantially to childhood morbidity and mortality, particularly from infectious diseases. In many part of the world, particularly developing ones like India, gross life threatening protein energy malnutrition is still rampant.

Protein energy malnutrition in children is frequently associated with an increased incidence of bacterial, fungal and viral infections (Scrimshaw et al, 1968). The alterations which occur in host defense mechanisms and which are of direct relevance to increased incidence of infections in these children are not exactly known. Impairment of cell mediated immunity (CMI) has been demonstrated in in vivo and in vitro tests (Smythe et al, 1971; Geefhuysen et al, 1971 and Ferguson et al, 1974) and dysfunction of polymorphonuclear leukocytes have also been shown in in vitro tests (Selvaraj and Bhat, 1972; Seth and Chandra, 1972 and Dougman and Schopfer, 1974).

On a global scale, malnutrition with frequently associated infections and infestations, is the commonest cause of immunodeficiencies, which is variable in severity and largely reversible. Infection worsens the nutritional status, often precipitating overt symptoms