

# The Current Landscape of Research on World Health Assembly Indicators in West Africa: A Systematic Map to Guide Decision-Making



**Ghana**

International Food Policy Research Institute

# Introduction

The West Africa (WA) Region has been one of the slowest in reducing its many burdens of malnutrition. The World Health Assembly's (WHA) 2025 nutrition targets were developed to track countries' nutritional situations, and measure progress in reducing malnutrition. These indicators are therefore essential to guide decision making. Understanding the regional and in-country dynamics are an essential first step to highlight gaps and trends in evidence in the region.

## Objective

This study aimed to identify and catalogue peer-reviewed research on the WHA indicators in West Africa, and create a map of recent research evidence to inform decision-making for nutrition policies and programs in the region.

# Methods

The MEDLINE database was searched for research published on World Health Assembly (WHA) indicators from 2010 to June 2021

Search terms were developed to capture evidence on the prevalence, drivers, programs (Randomized Controlled Trials), and policies relating to the WHA indicators. These include stunting, wasting and overweight in children under 5, low birth weight (LBW), exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) up to 6 months, and anemia in women of reproductive age (WRA)

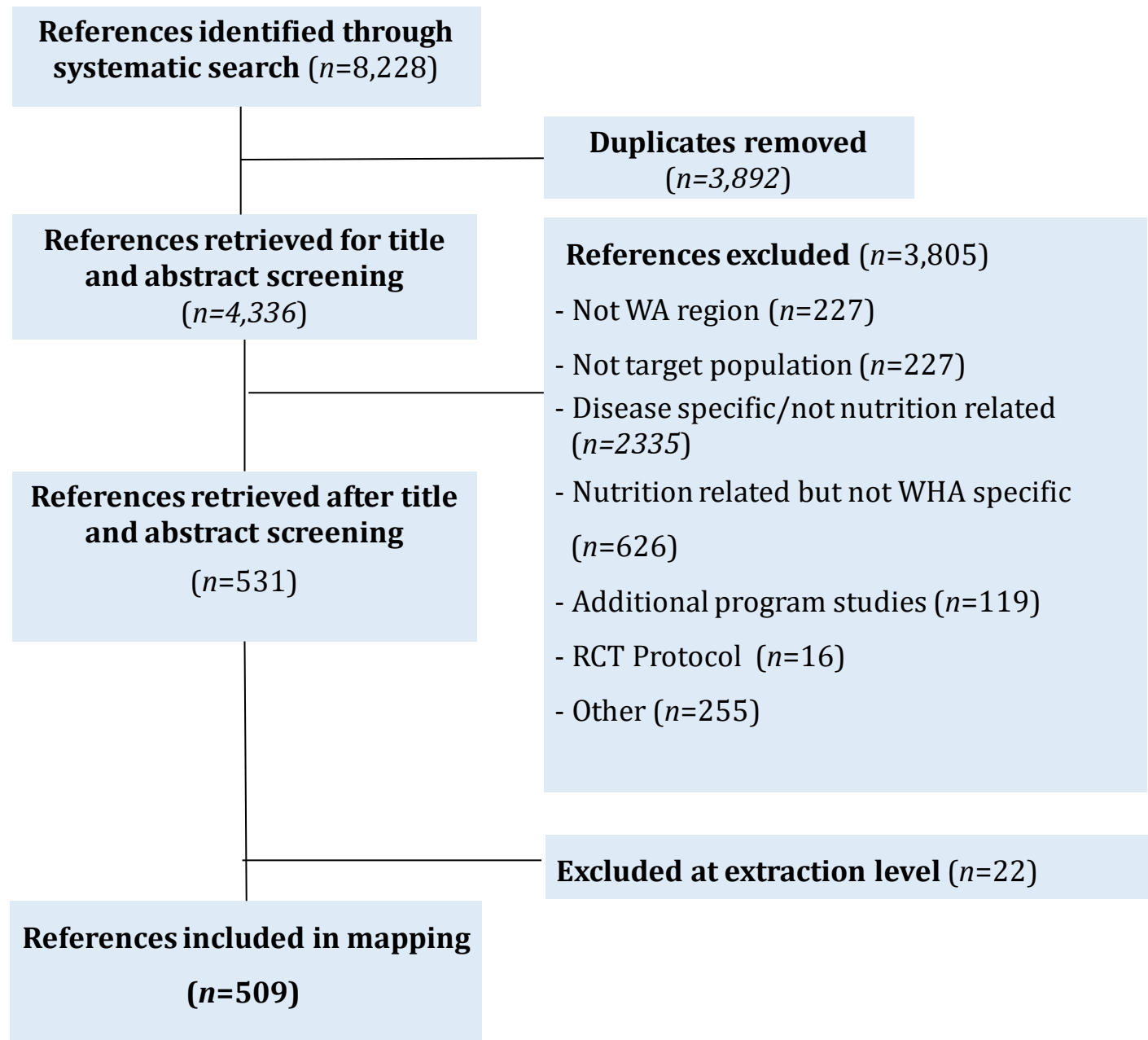


A systematic approach was applied to literature searches, developing inclusion criteria, screening, coding, taxonomy, data extraction, and study synthesis

Data were extracted at abstract level.

No quality appraisal of publications was undertaken

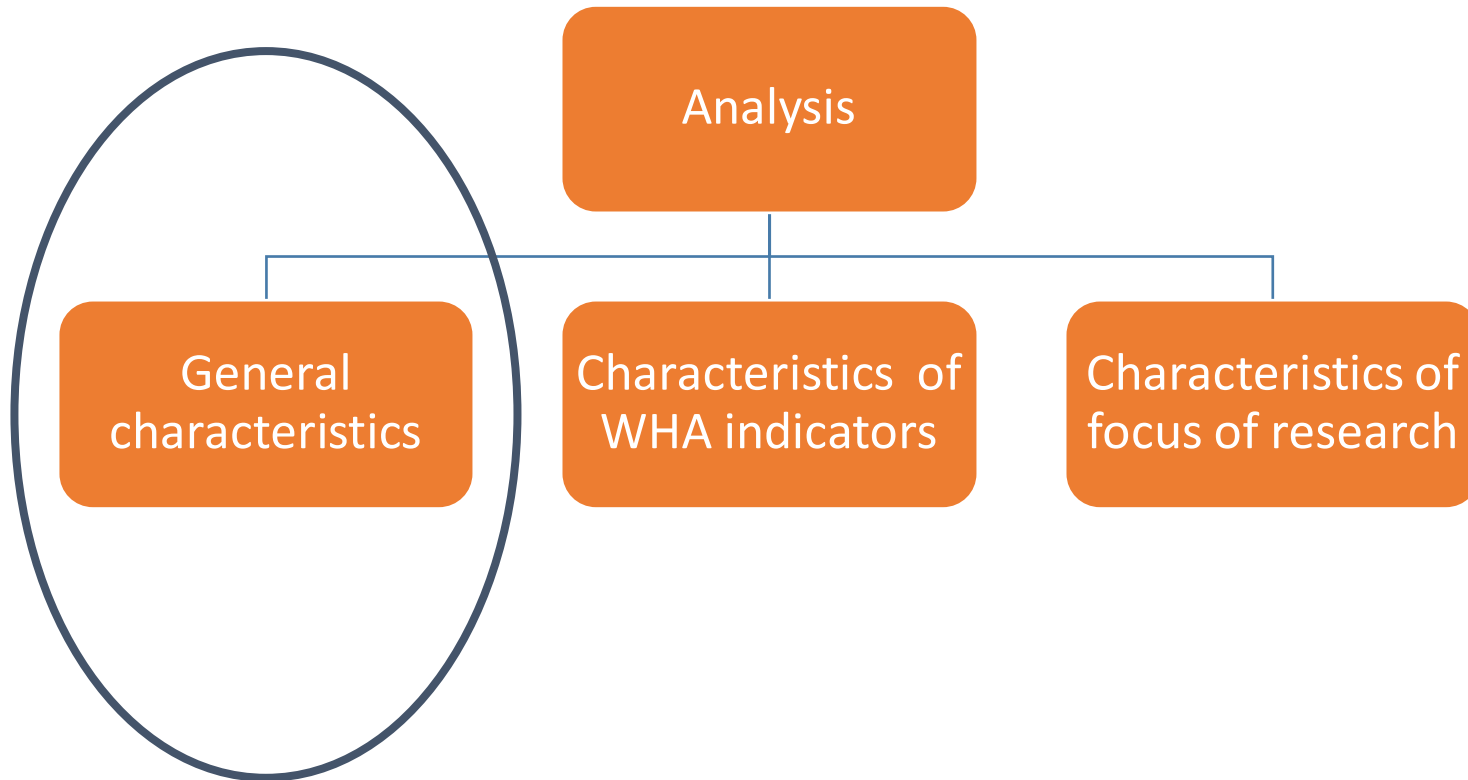
# Flow chart of search approach



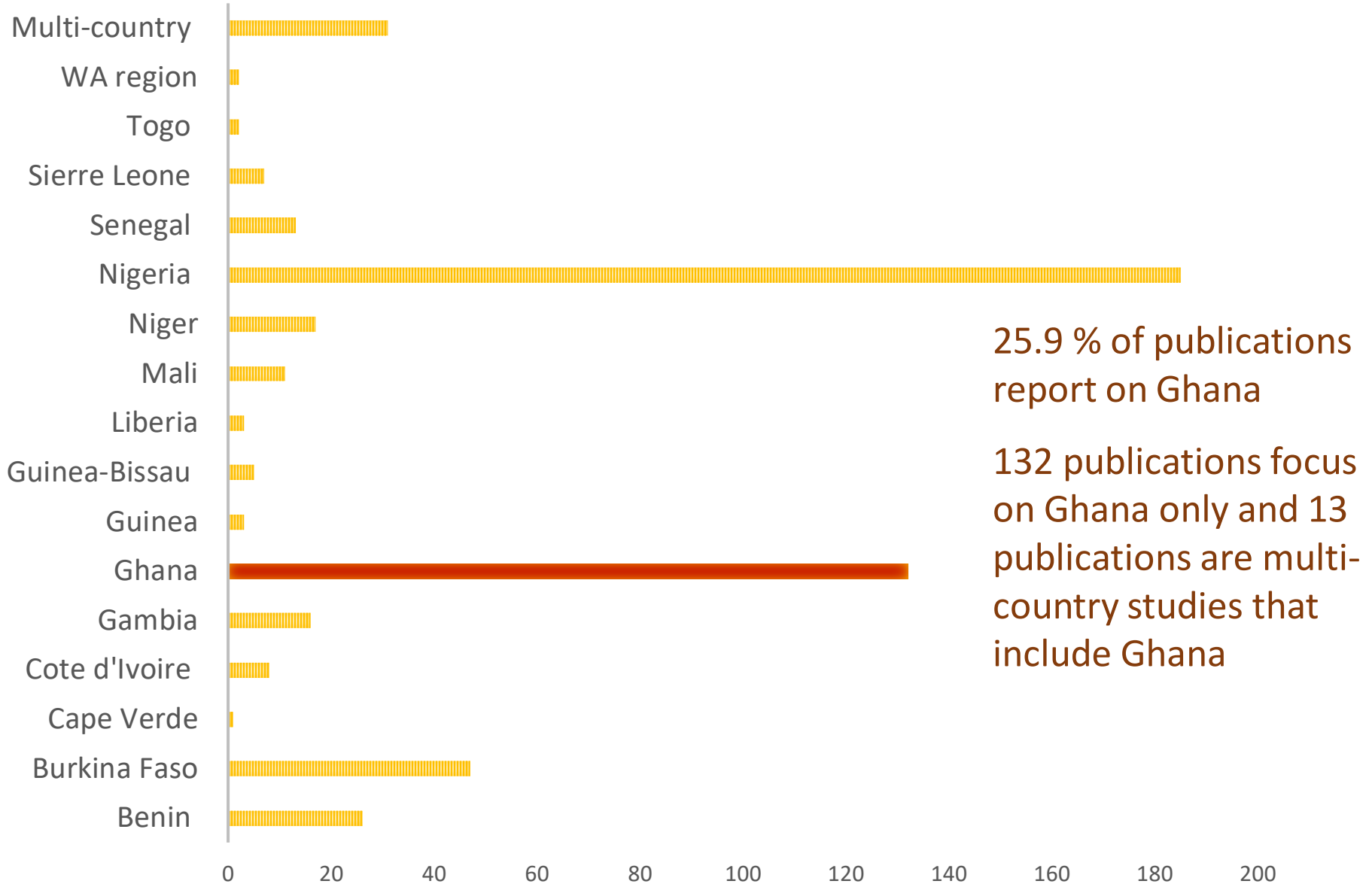
# Results – Ghana



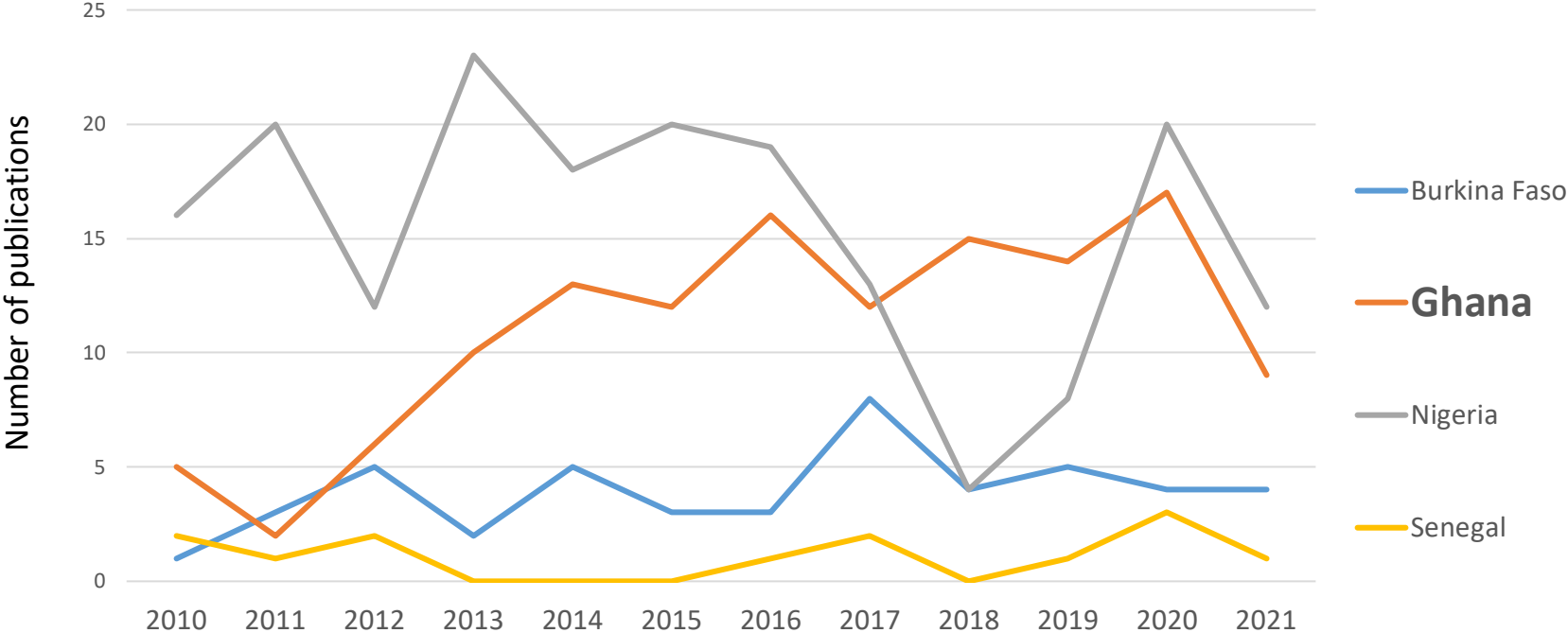
# Results



# Number of publications by country

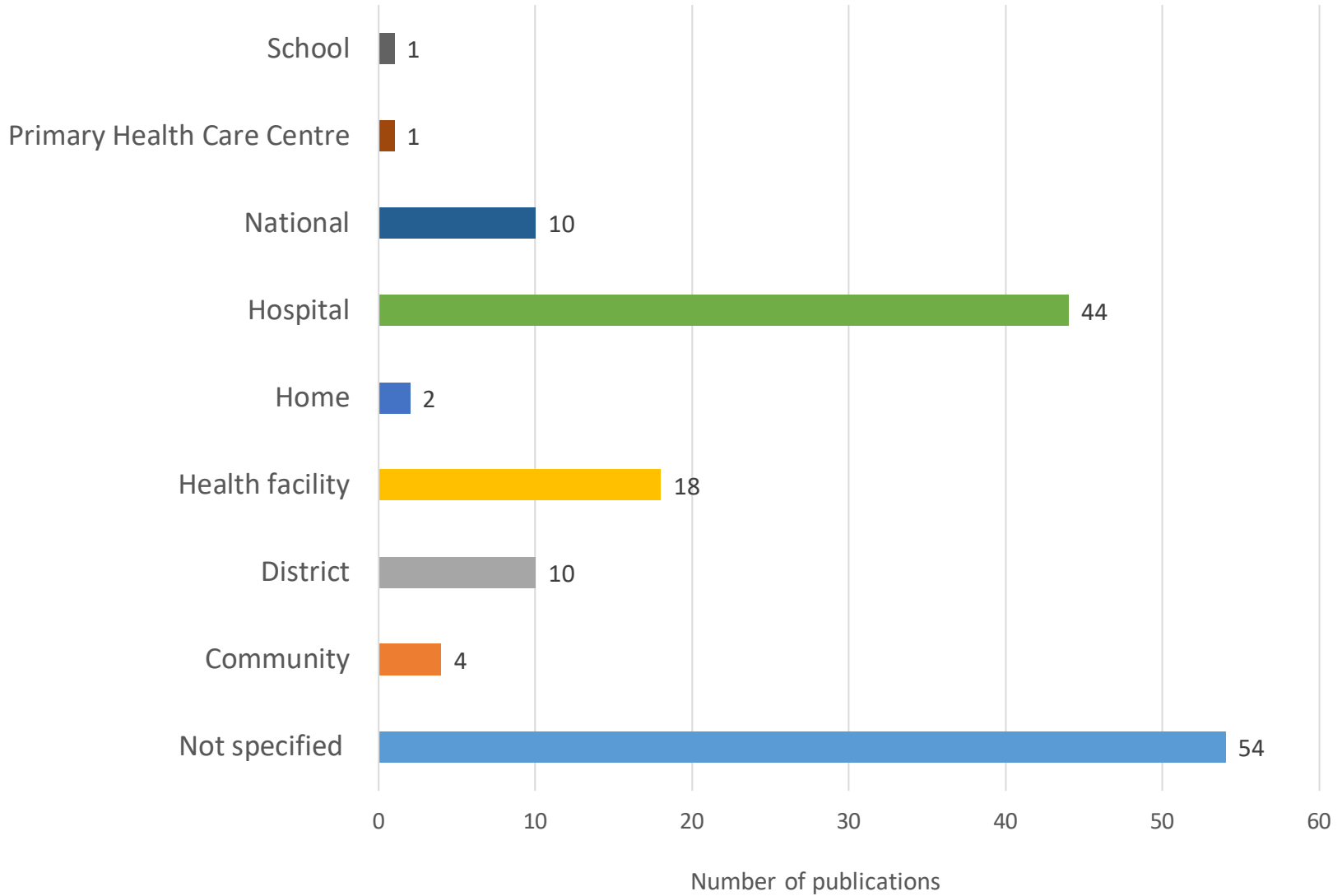


# Publications per year in four focal countries



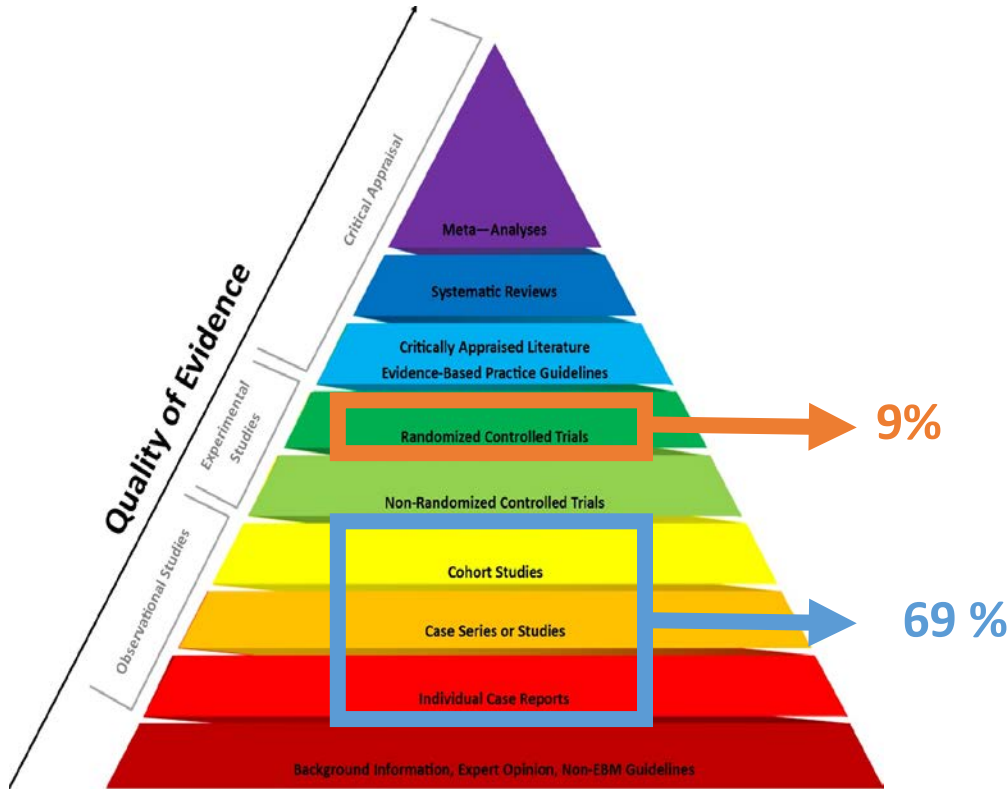


# Publications reporting on Ghana by study setting

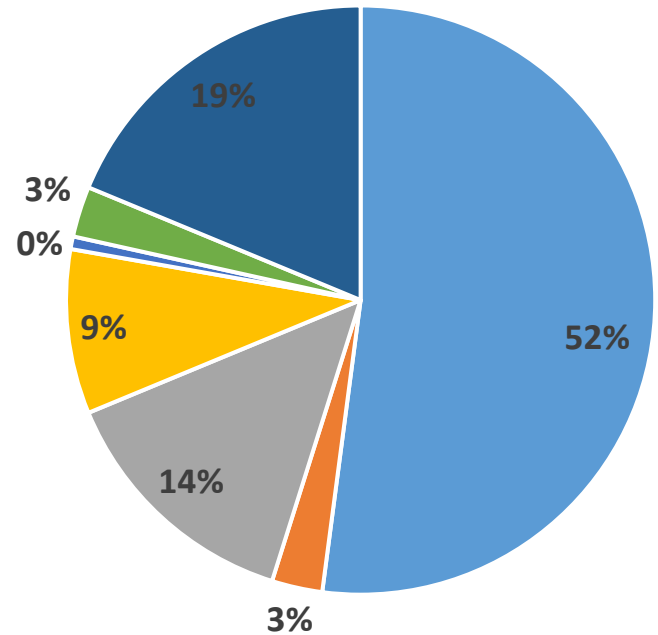


# Publications reporting on Ghana by study design

Hierarchy of evidence

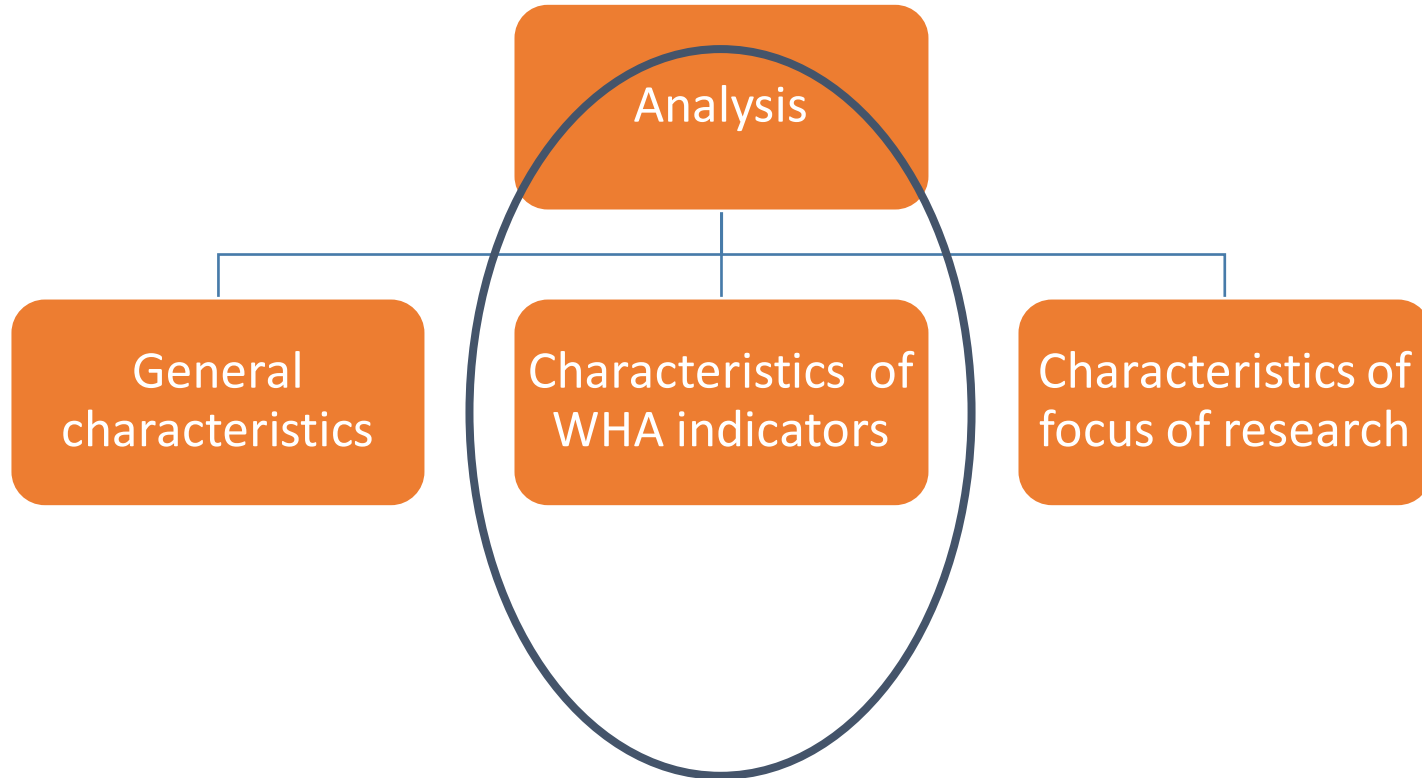


Percent of publications per study design (n=132)

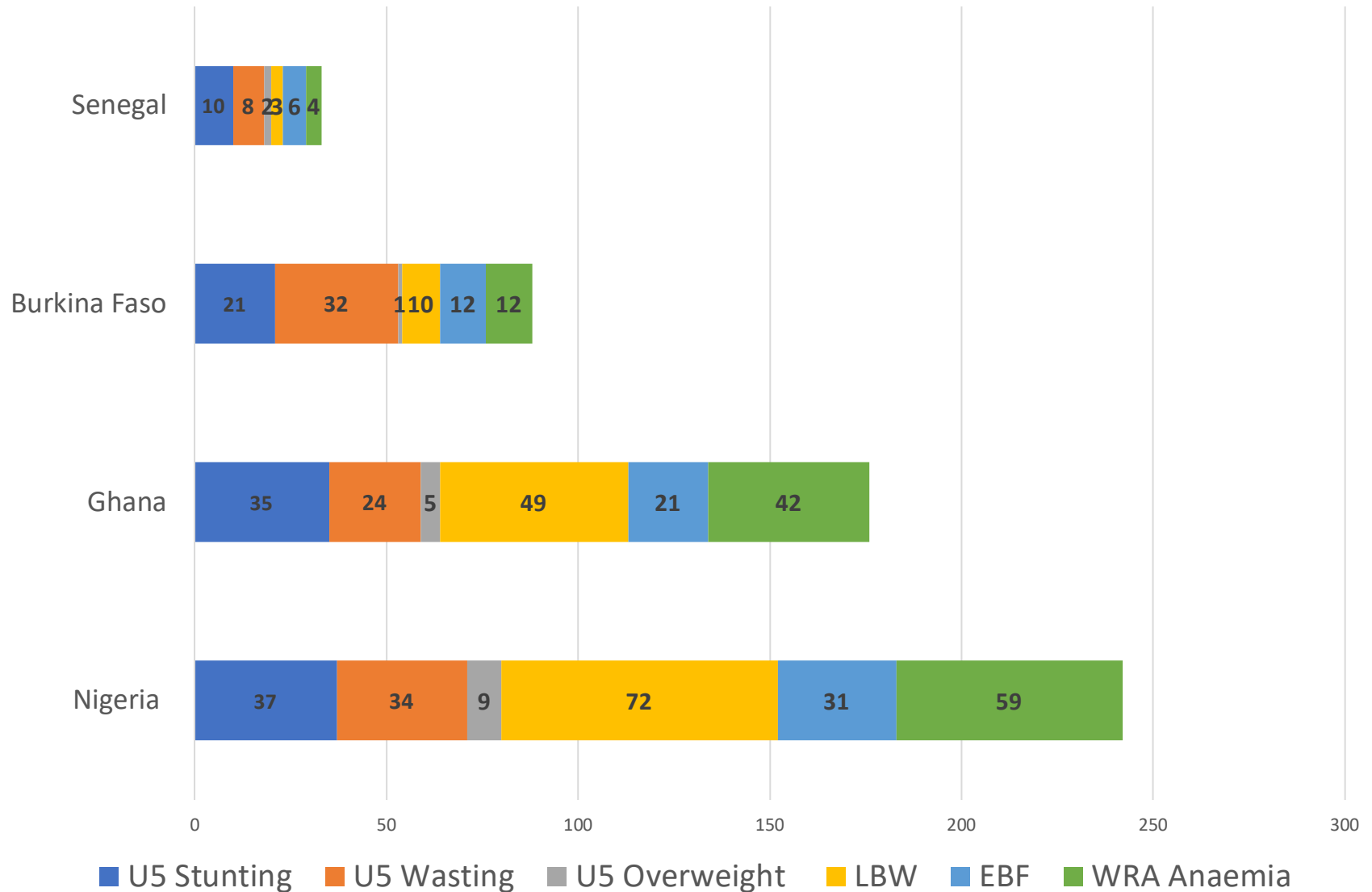


- Cross-sectional
- Cohort
- Mixed methods
- Not specified
- Case-control
- RCT
- Other

# Results

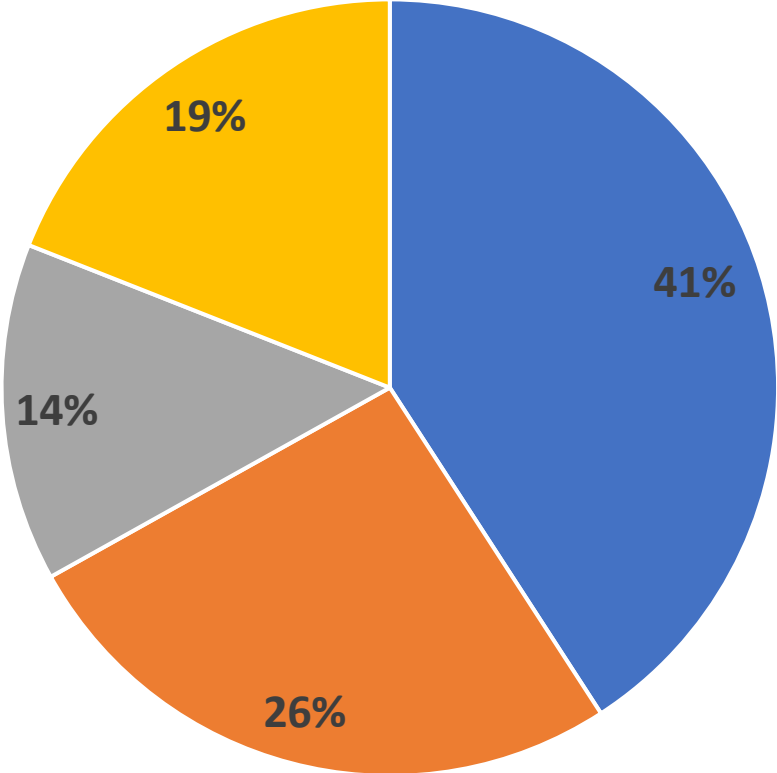


# Publications per indicator category grouping in focal countries

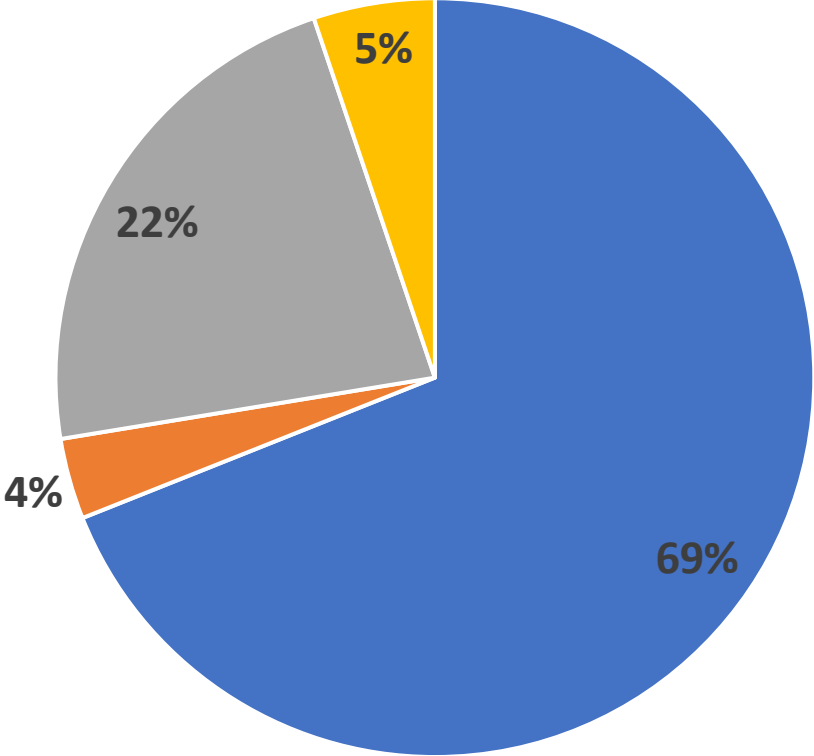


# Publications reporting on Ghana per indicator category

Percent of publications per indicator category (n=142)

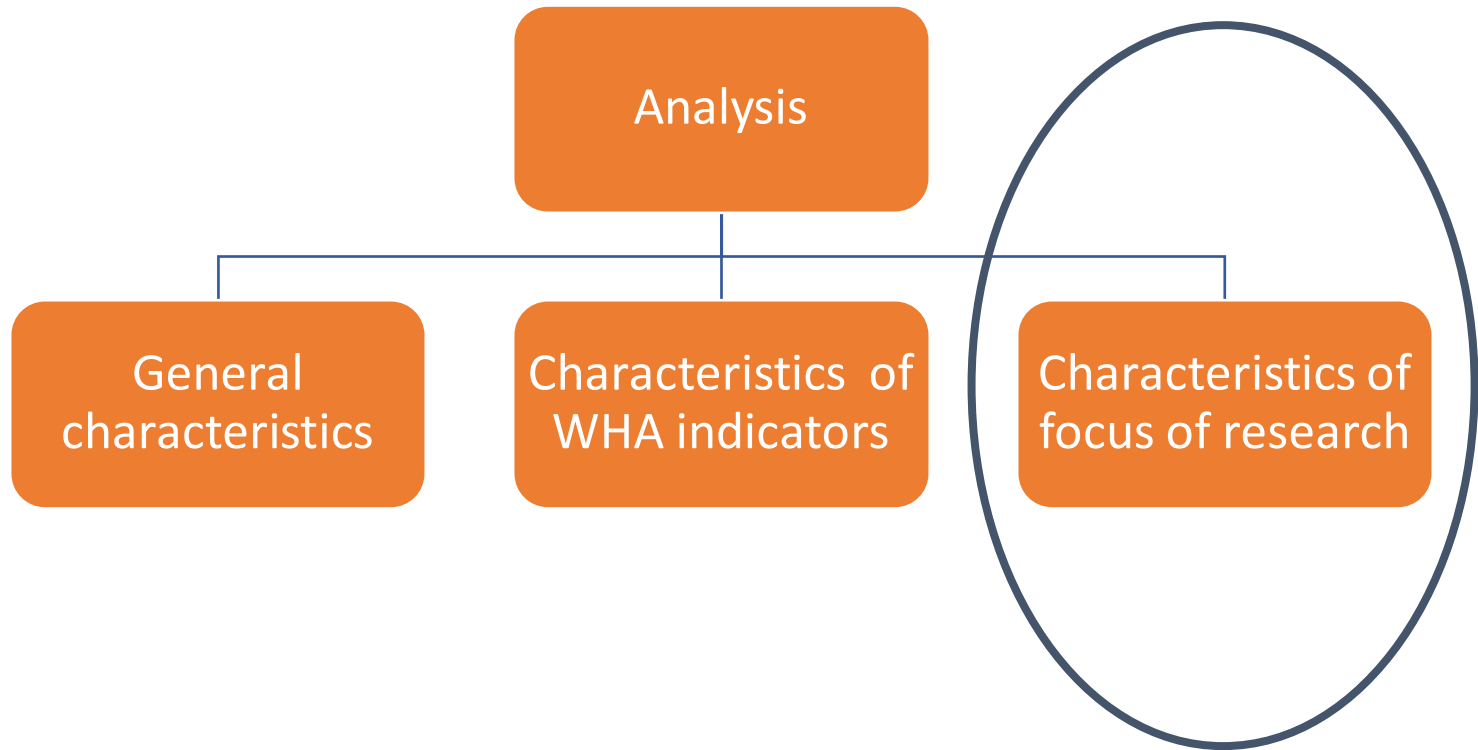


Percent of publications within U5NS (n=58)

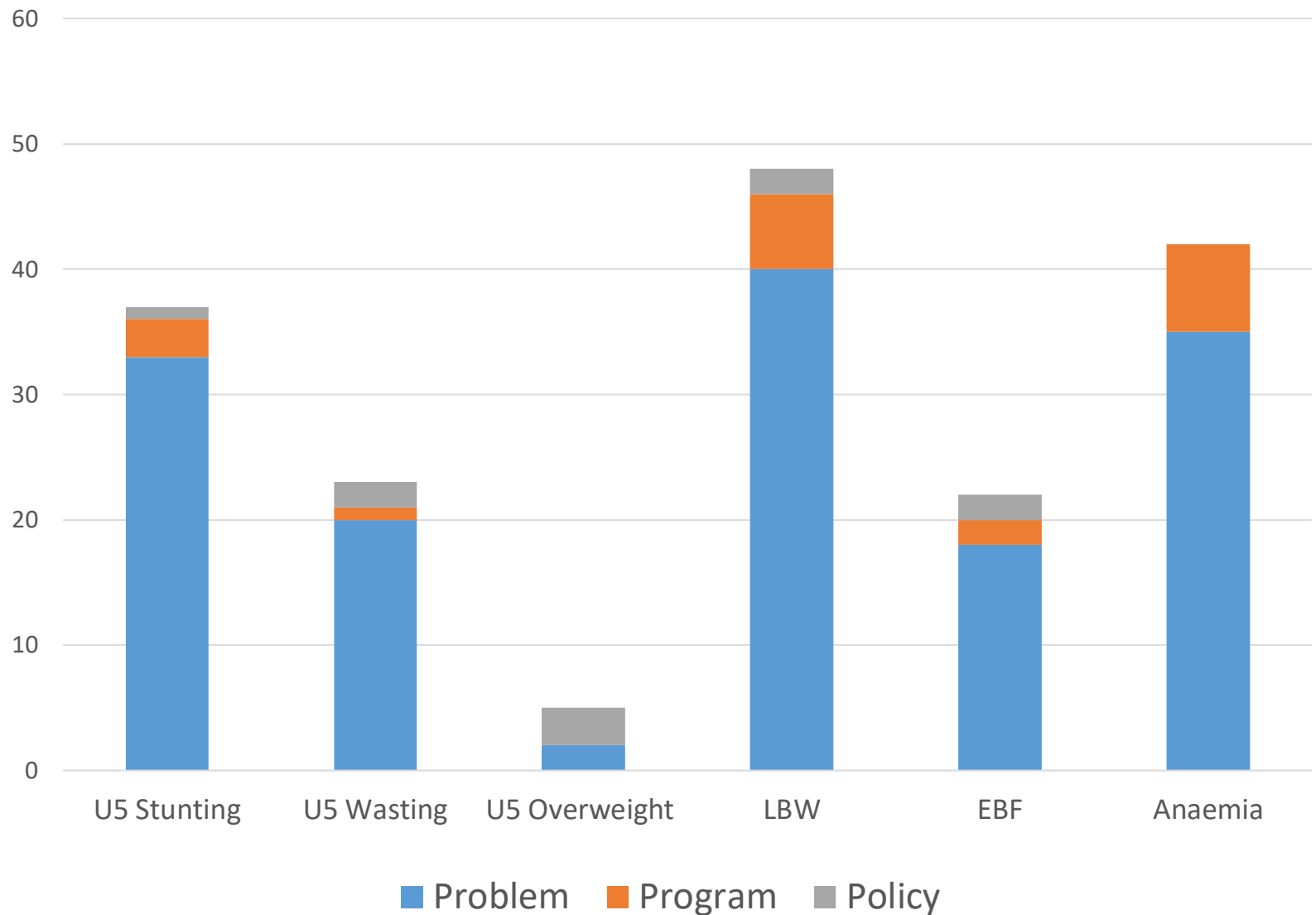


■ U5NS ■ WRA Anaemia ■ EBF ■ More than 1 indicator ■ LBW ■ U5 Overweight ■ U5 Stunting ■ U5 Wasting

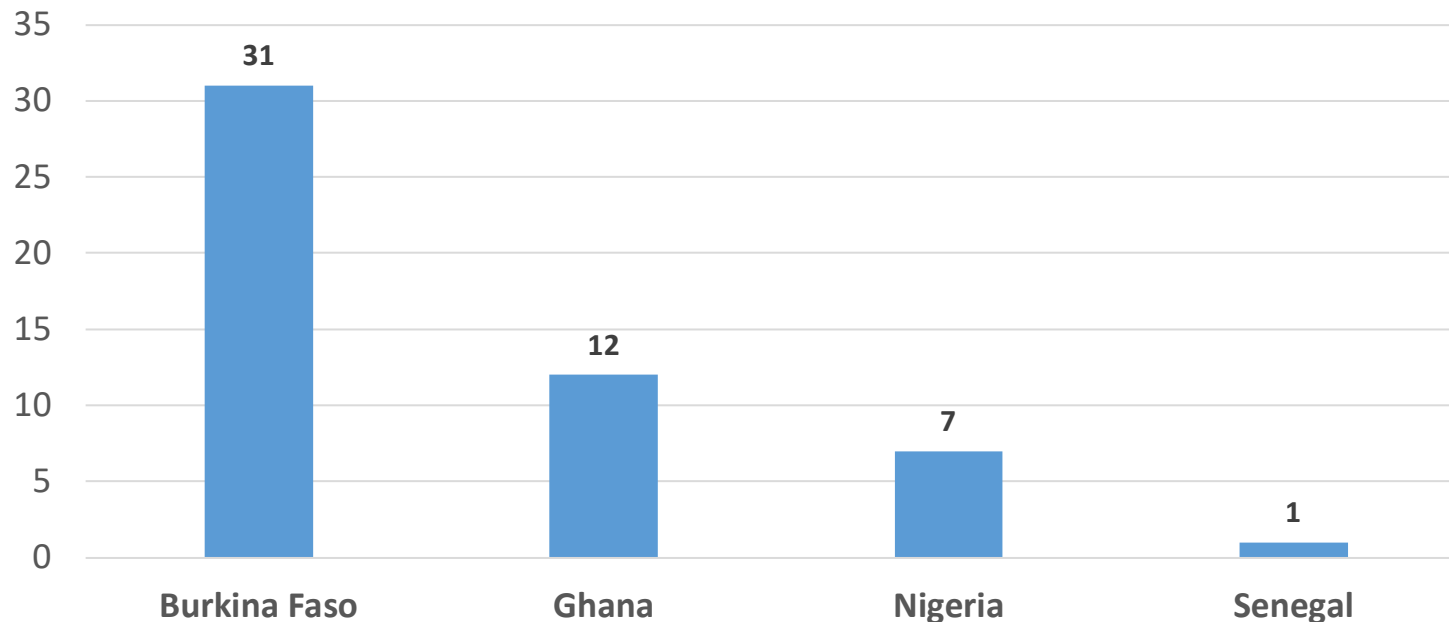
# Results



## Publications reporting on Ghana per indicator category and research focus



## Program studies by intervention type and outcome



### Ghana's programs

Intervention description	U5NS (n=5)	EBF (n=1)	Anaemia (n=4)
Supplementation	4	1	2
Counseling/ Health promotion	4	1	1
Screening/Treatment Malaria	1	0	1



## Key Messages

26% of the publications were conducted in Ghana

The majority of research studies report on under 5 nutritional status. Within this, the majority of studies report on low birth weight and very few report on under 5 overweight

Most publications were conducted within hospitals

The majority of publications reported on the prevalence and drivers of indicator categories, and very few report on policy and programs