

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



Nigeria

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)

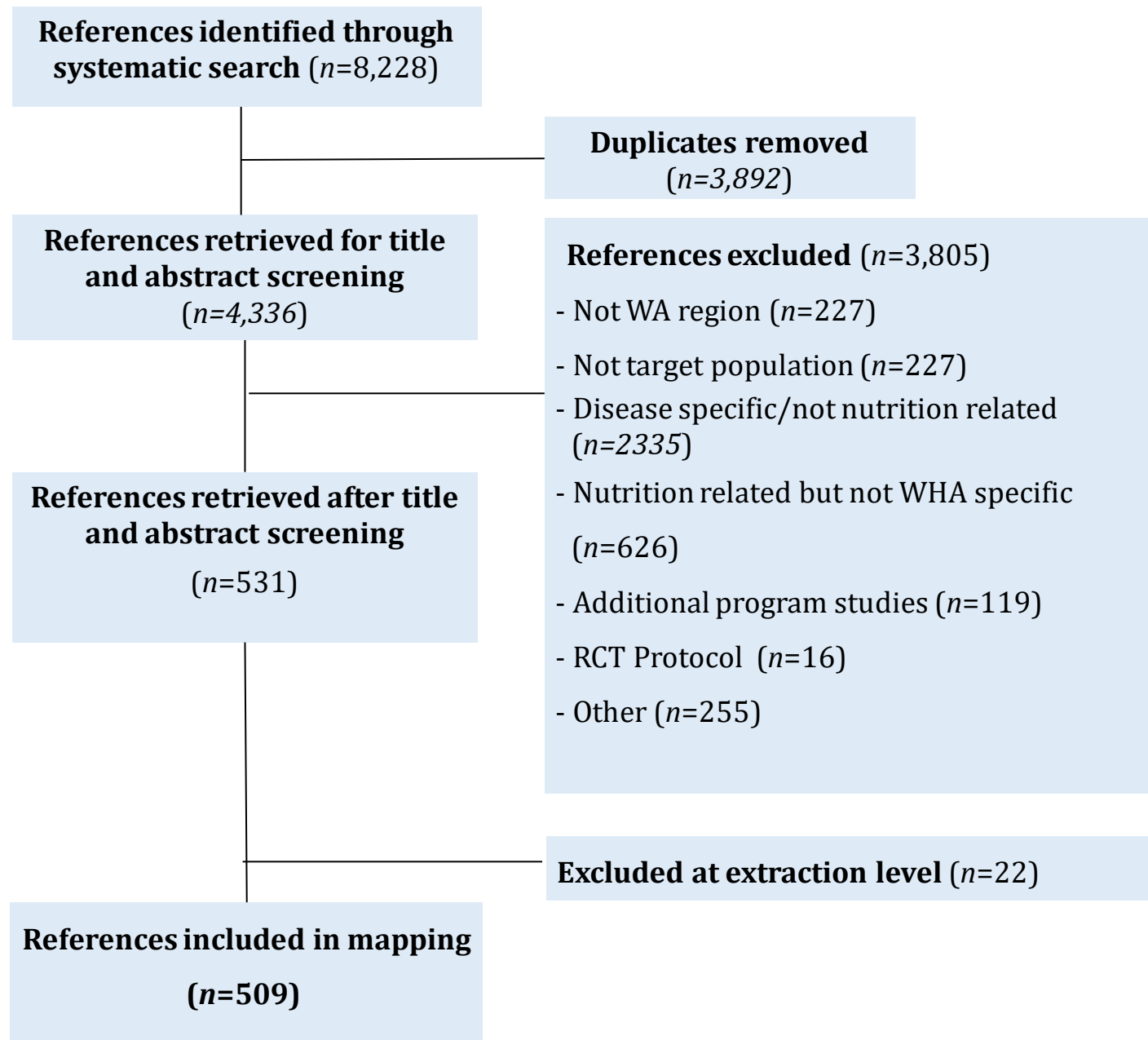


A systematic approach was applied to literature searches, developing inclusion criteria, screening, coding, taxonomy, data extraction, and study synthesis

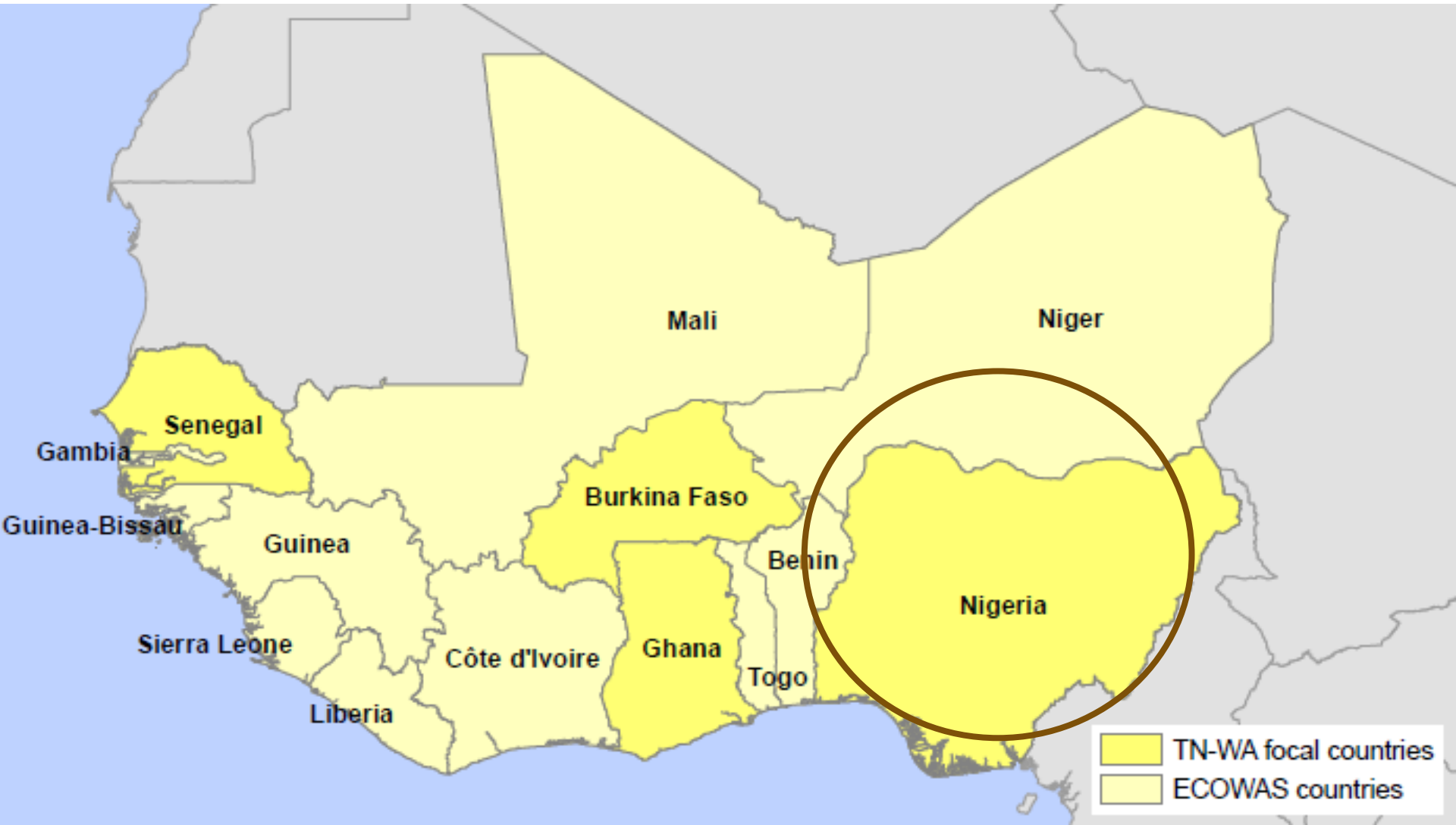
Data were extracted at abstract level.

No quality appraisal of publications was undertaken

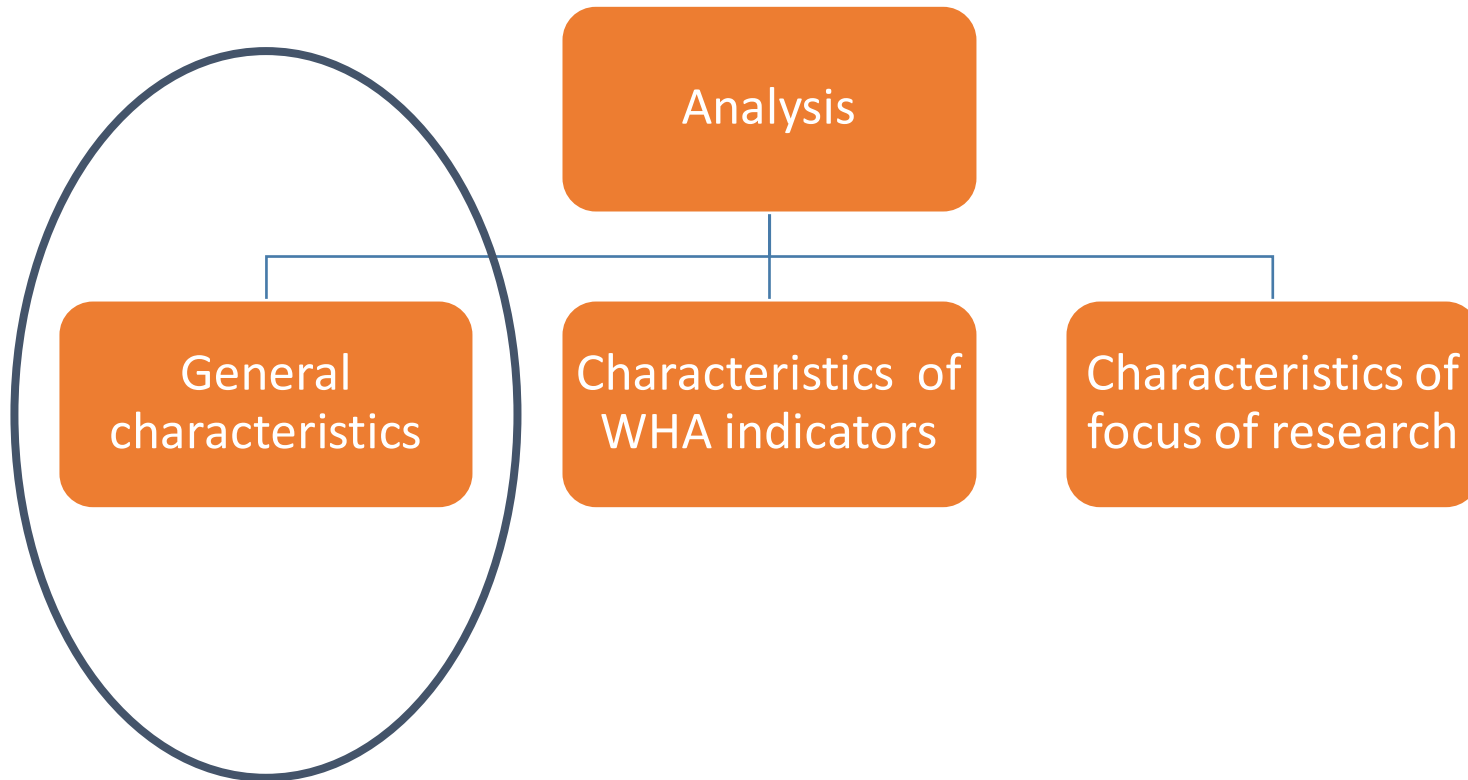
Flow chart of search approach



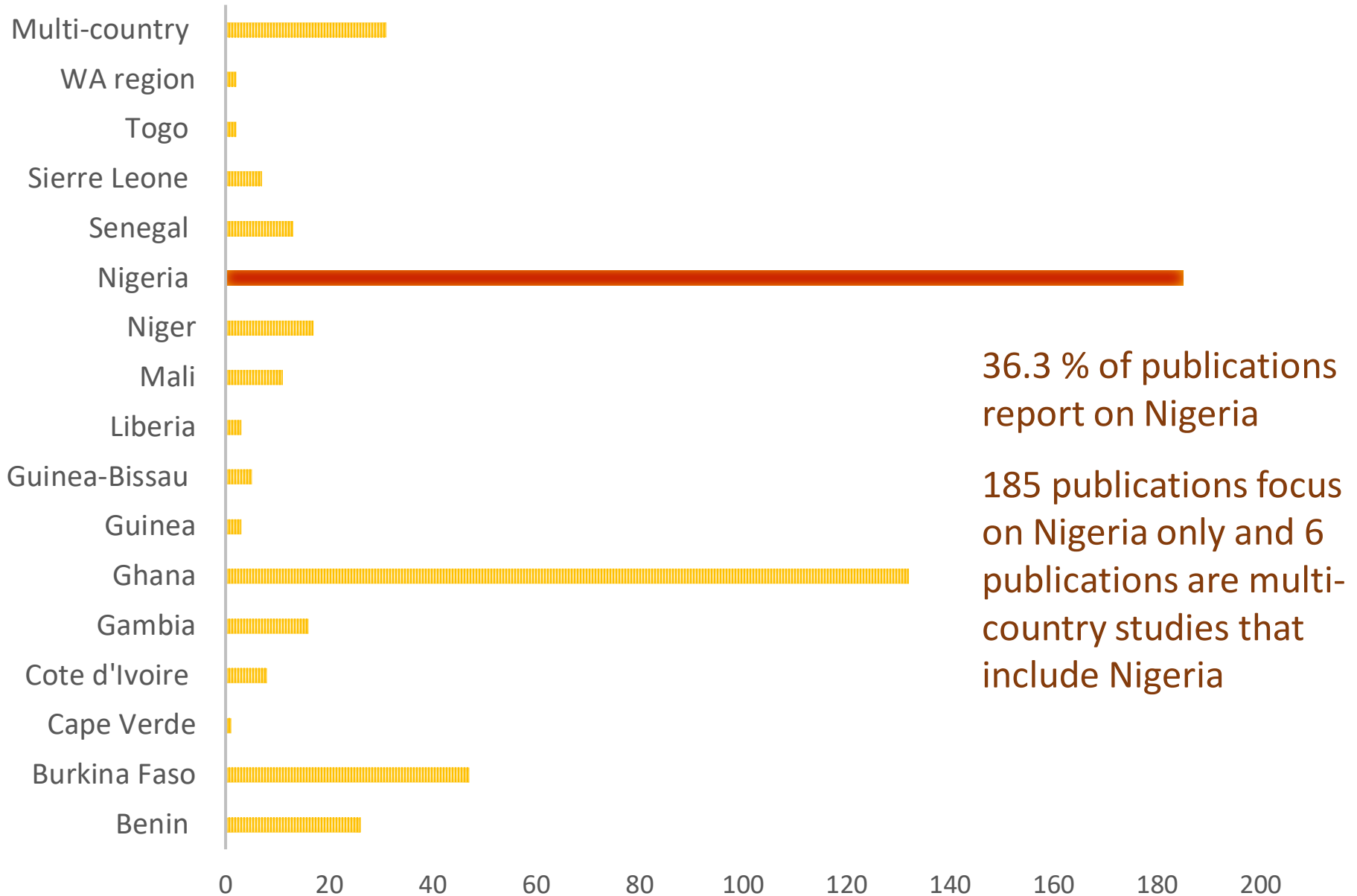
Results – Nigeria



Results



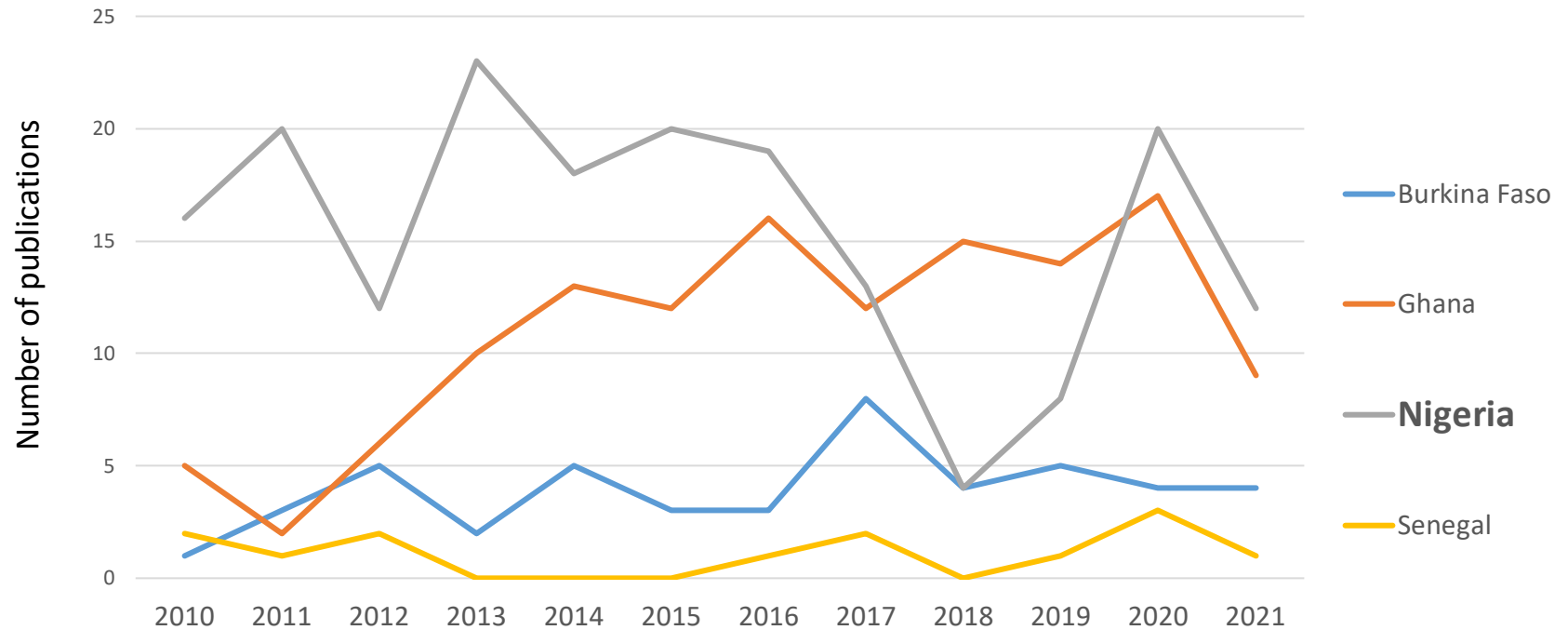
Number of publications by country



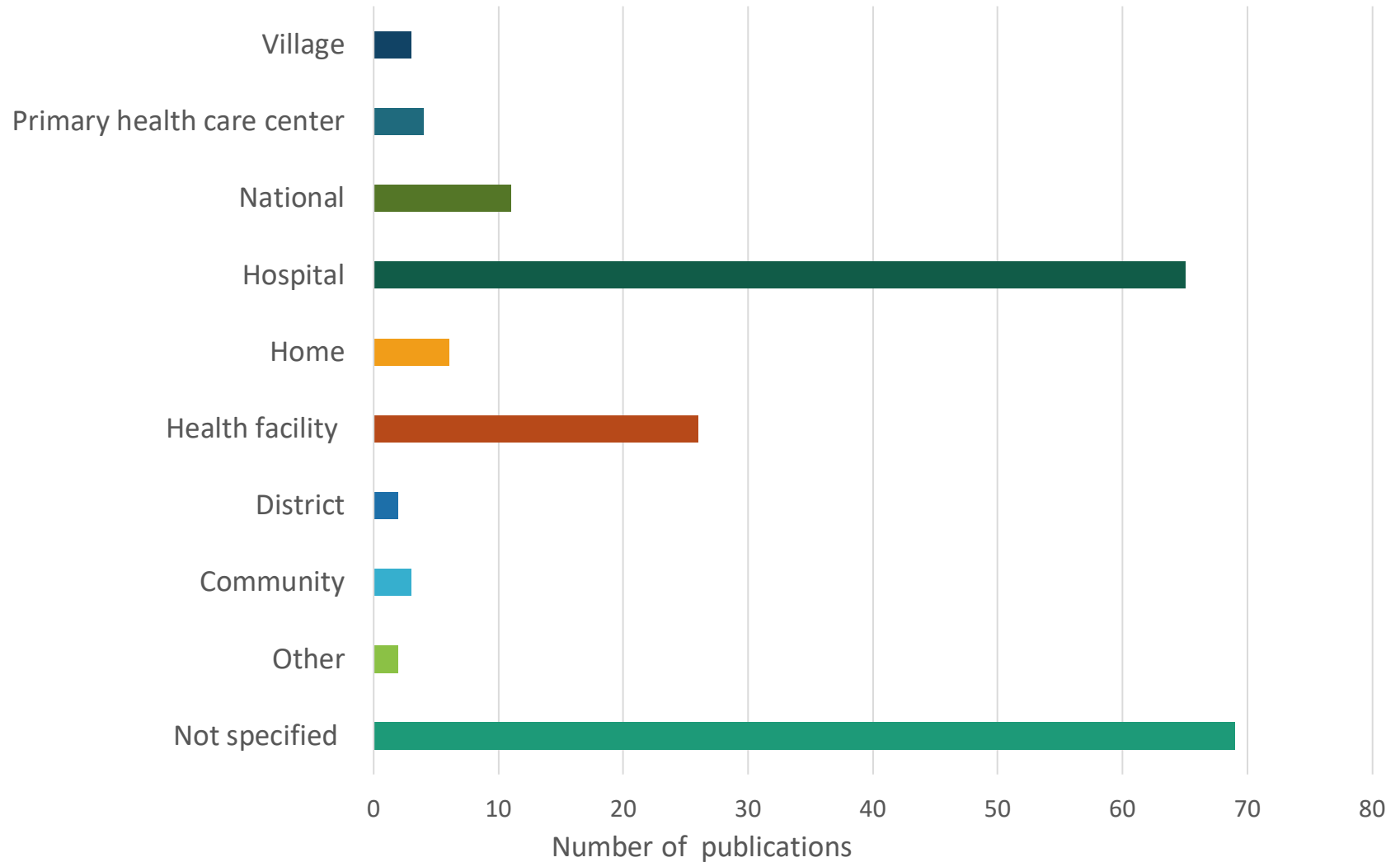
36.3 % of publications report on Nigeria

185 publications focus on Nigeria only and 6 publications are multi-country studies that include Nigeria

Publications per year in four focal countries



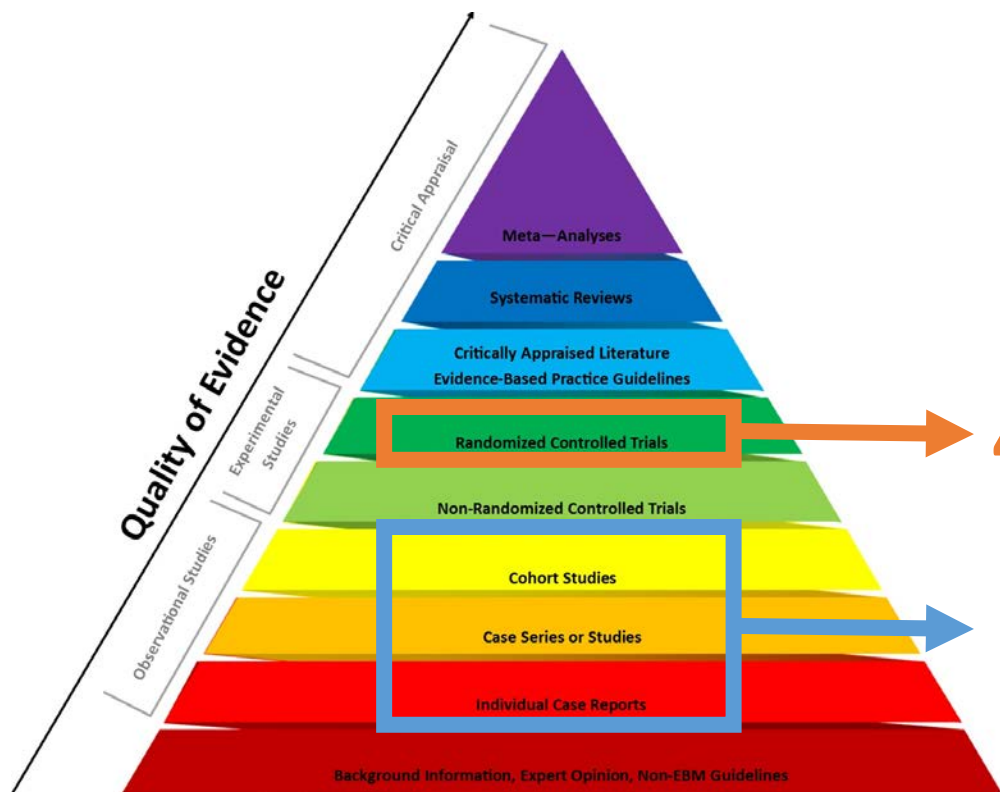
Publications reporting on Nigeria by study setting



Publications reporting on Nigeria by study design

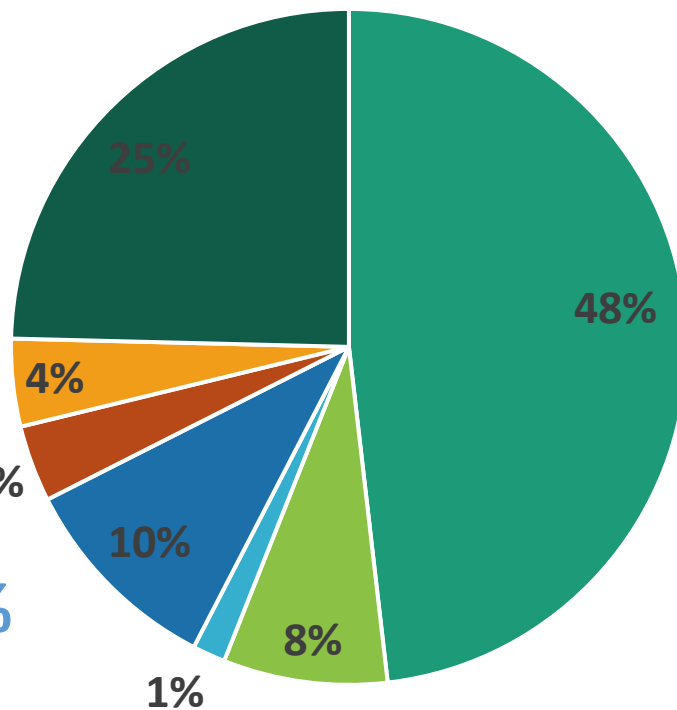
Hierarchy of evidence

Percent of publications per study design (n=185)



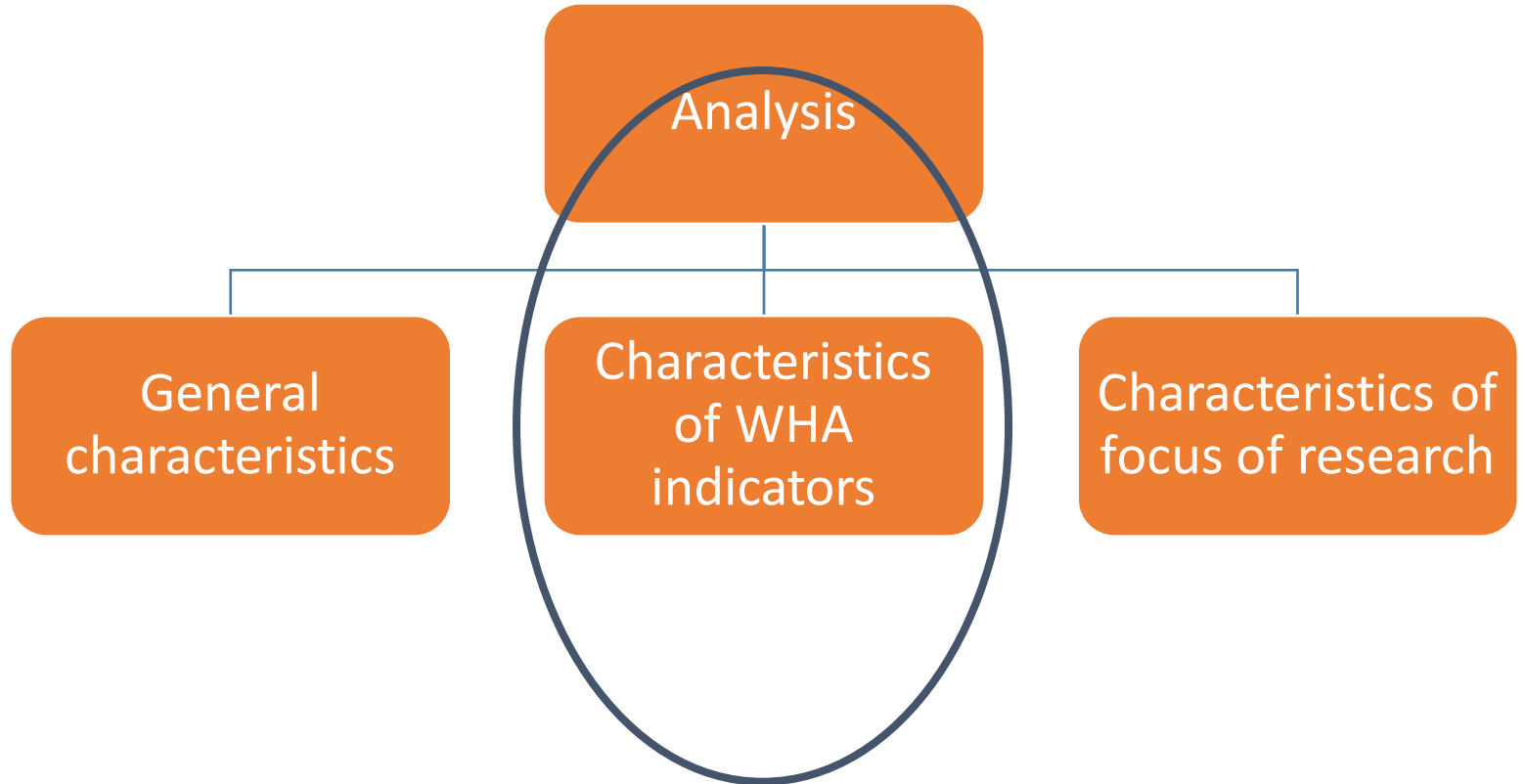
4%

67%

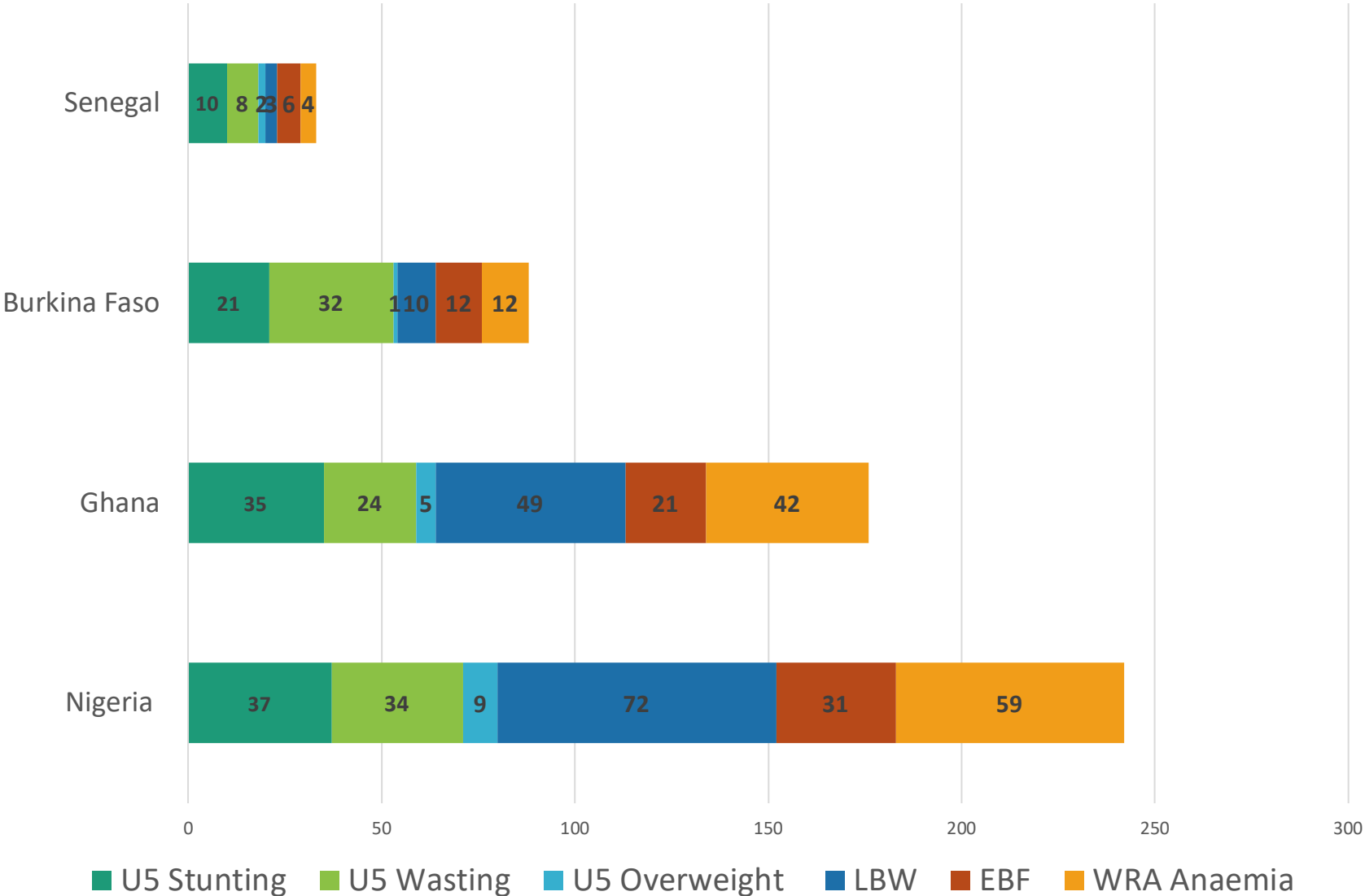


- Cross-sectionnal
- Case-control
- Case-series
- Cohort
- RCT
- Not specified
- Other

Results

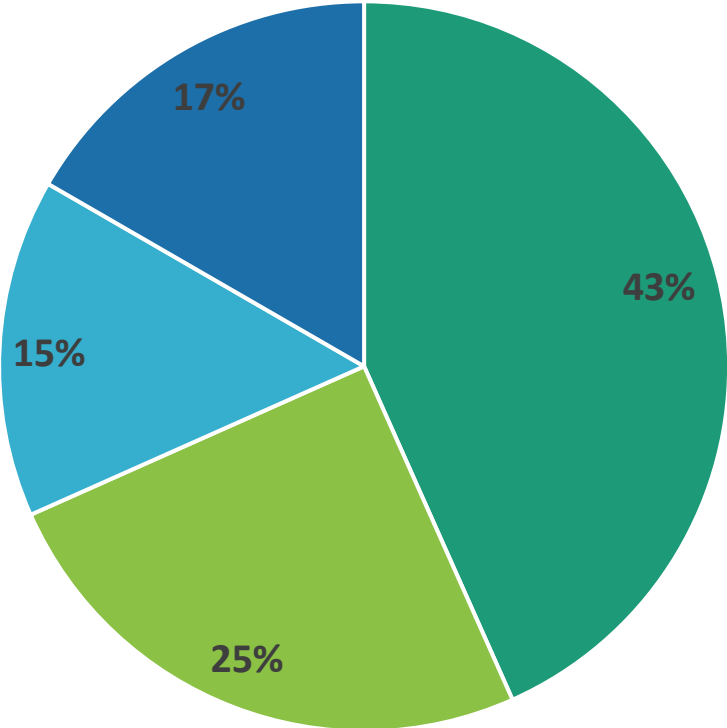


Publications per indicator category grouping for four focal countries

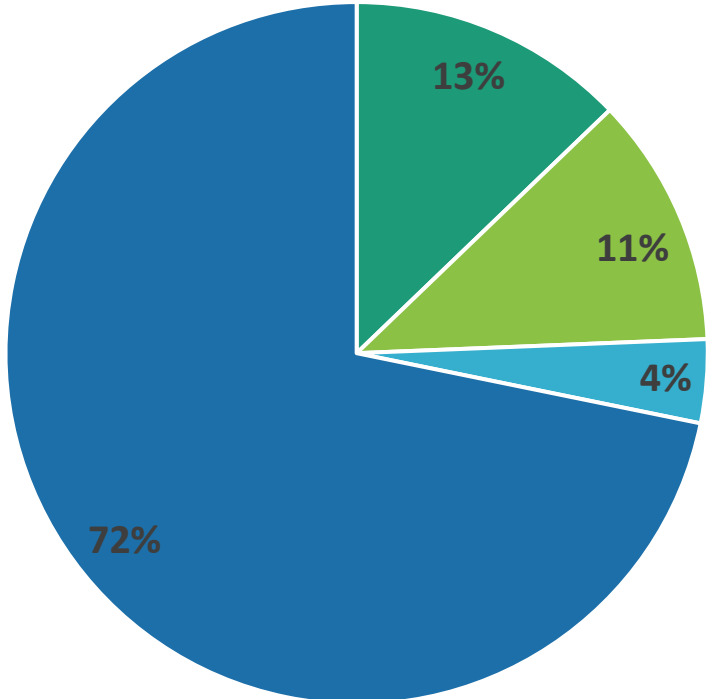


Publications reporting on Nigeria per indicator category

Percent of publications per indicator category (n=180)

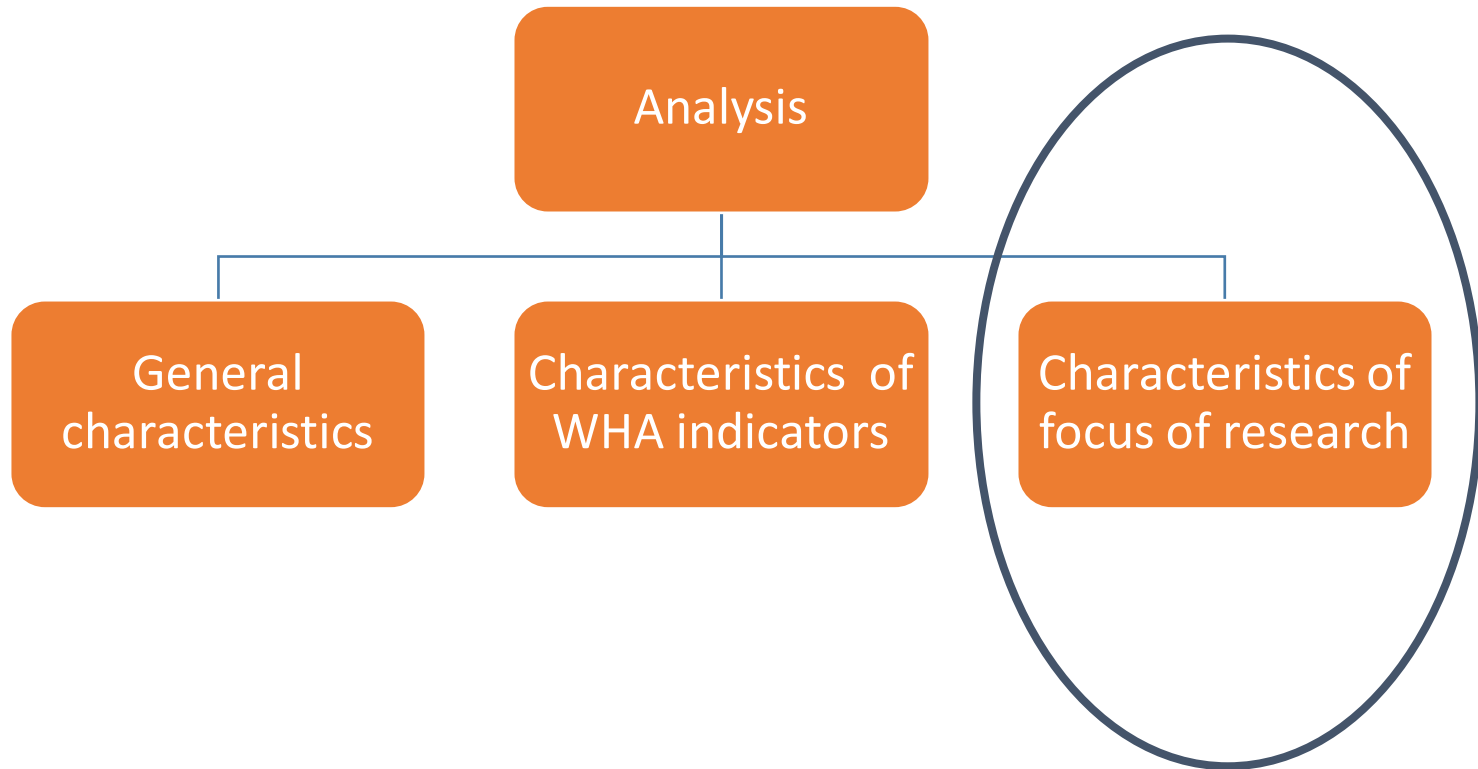


Breakdown of publications within U5NS (n=78)

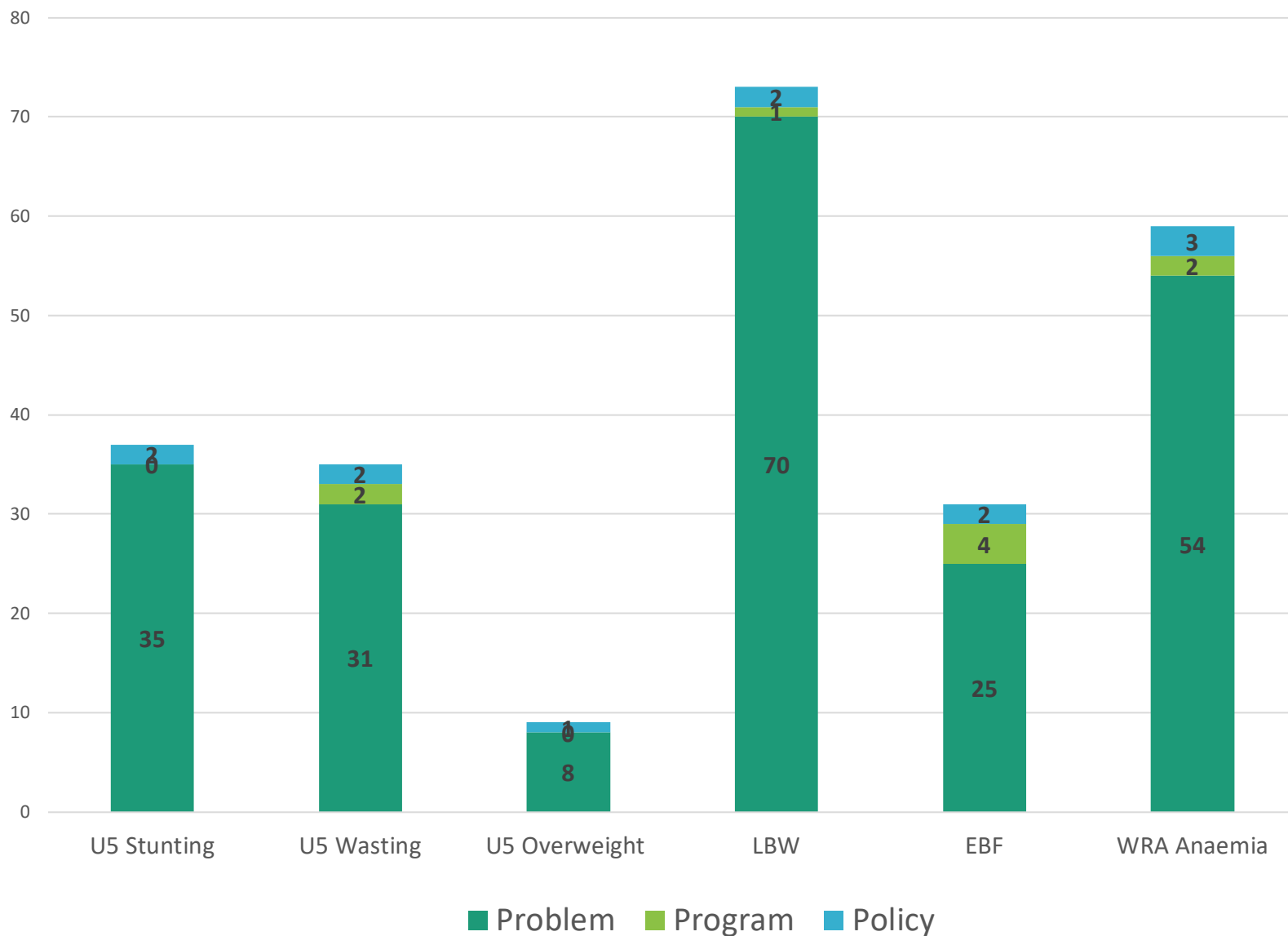


■ U5NS ■ WRA Anaemia ■ EBF ■ More than 1 indicator ■ U5 Stunting ■ U5 Wasting ■ U5 Overweight ■ LBW

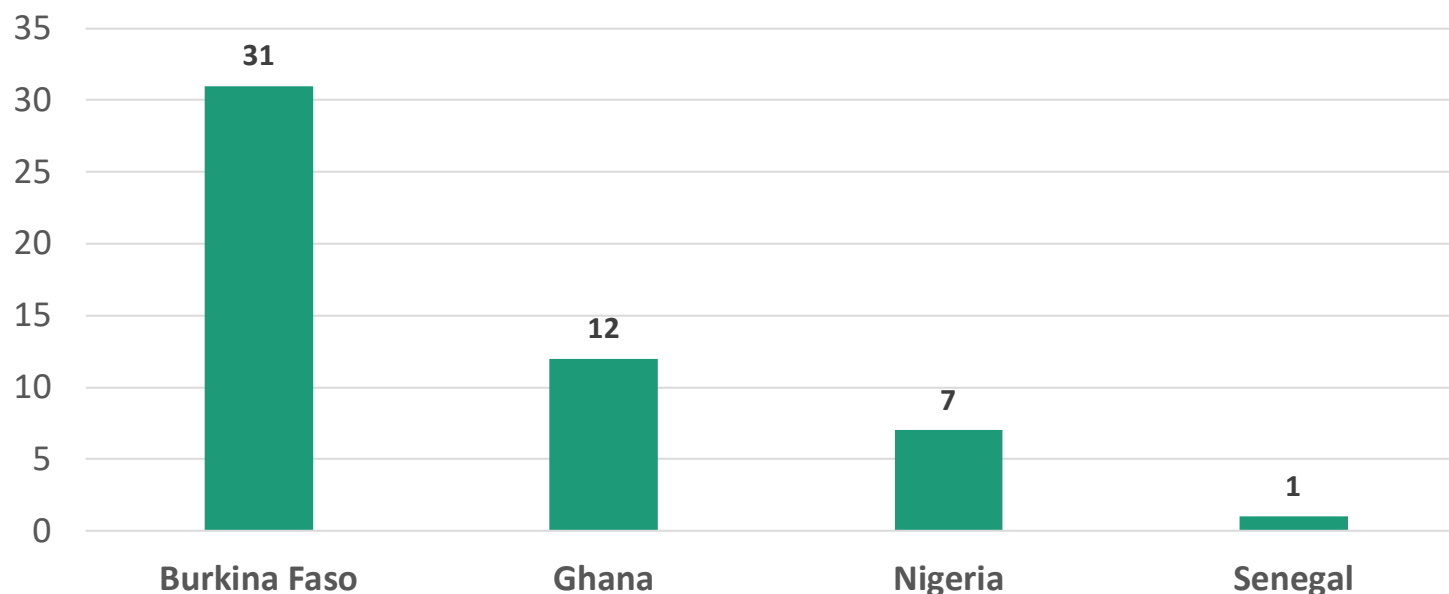
Results



Publications reporting on Nigeria per indicator category and research focus



Program studies by intervention type and outcome



Nigeria's programs

Intervention description	U5NS (n=2)	EBF (n=3)	Anaemia (n=2)
Supplementation	1	0	2
Health promotions/ Peer counseling	0	3	0
Screening/Treatment Malaria	1	0	0

Key Messages

Nigeria has the most amount of publications in the region (147 out of 340)

The majority of studies report on under 5 nutritional status. Low birth weight is highly reported on, but very few report on under 5 overweight

Most studies report on the prevalence or drivers of World Health Assembly indicators, with very few reporting on policy and programs.