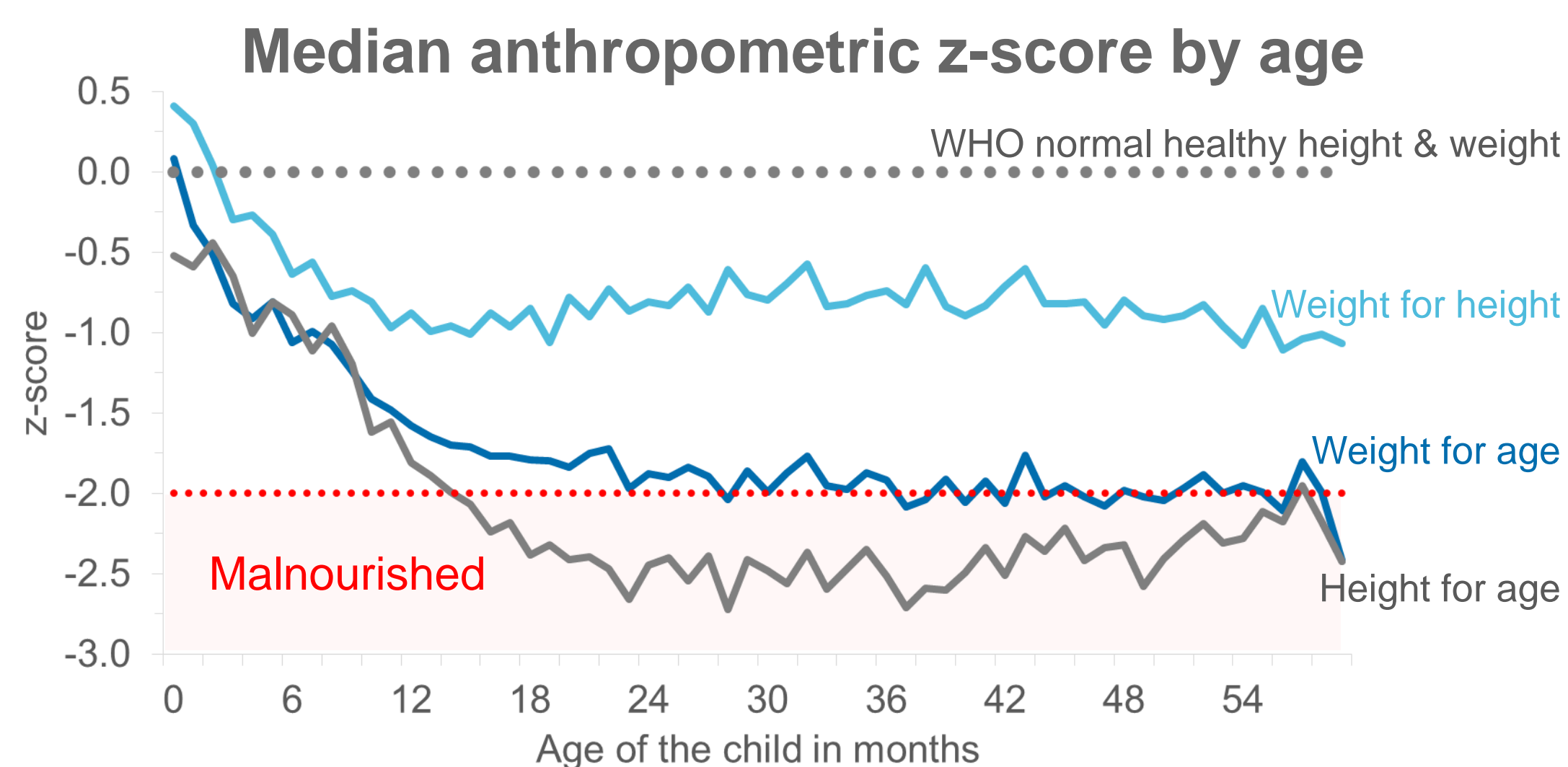


# Nutrition: How Does it Relate to Agricultural Production, Livelihoods & Preferences?

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## Introduction

Children in Timor-Leste are born close to what the WHO considers as normal, healthy weight & height, but this deteriorates rapidly over the first 2 years of life.

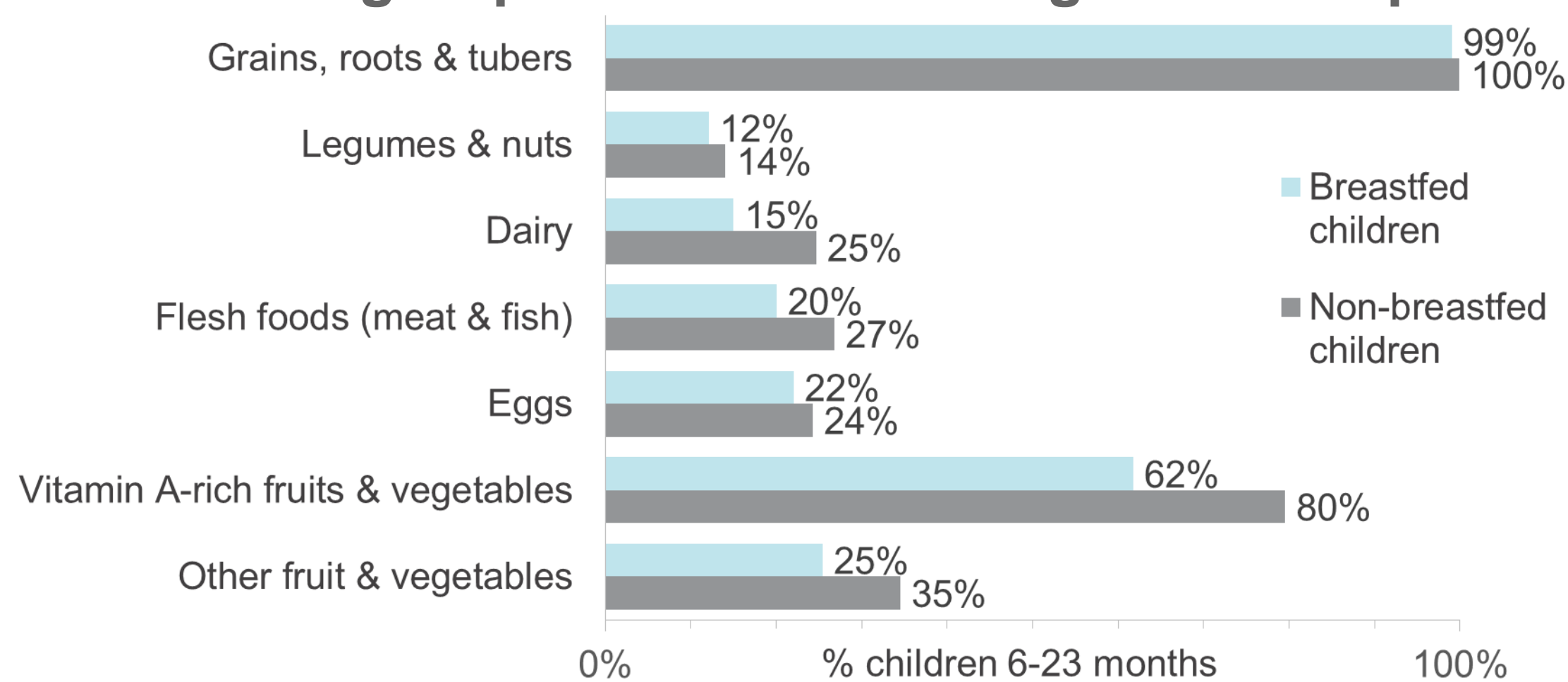


This study uses the 2013 Food & Nutrition Survey & other data sources to investigate why we see this deterioration, & considers the role that agricultural production, livelihoods & household preferences for particular foods can have on the nutritional status of children.

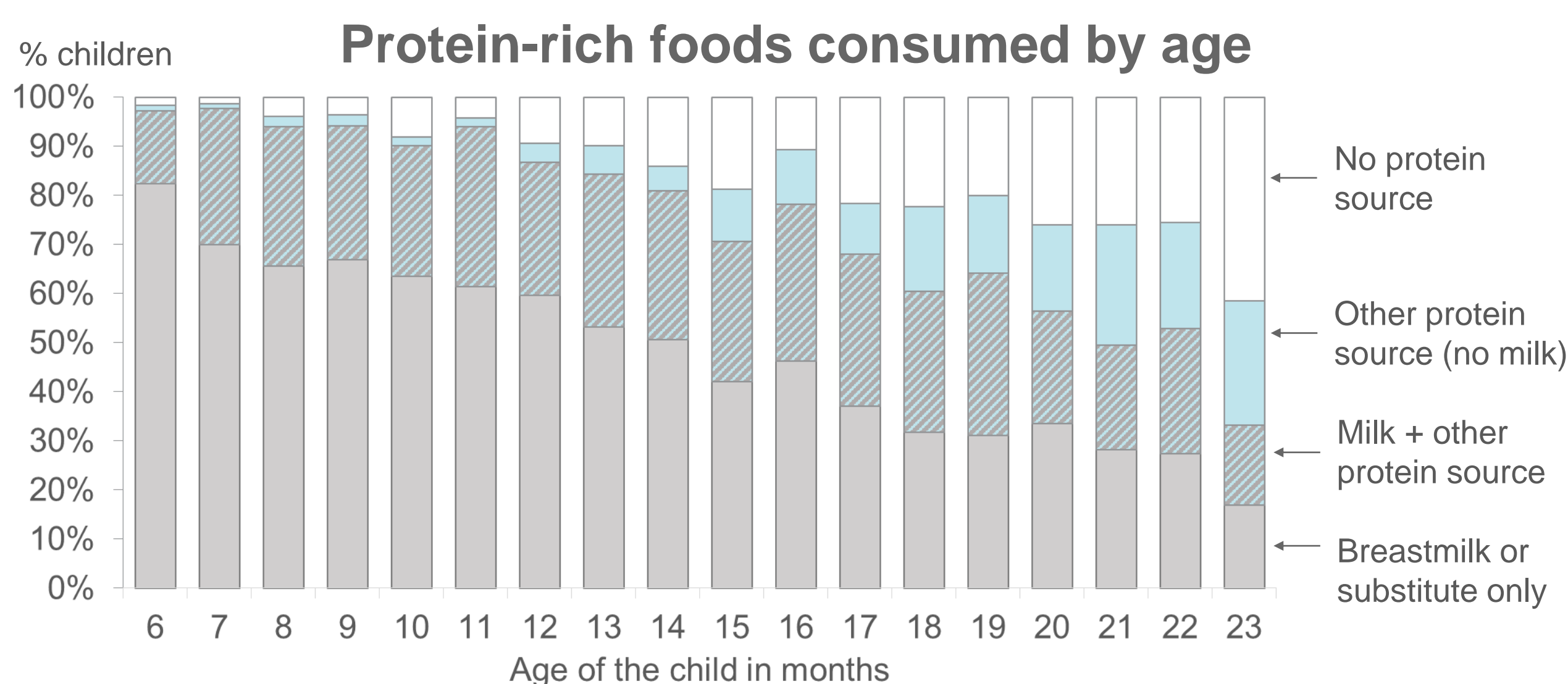
## What are children (not) eating?

There is insufficient variety in the daily diet of children 6-23 months:  
 ▶ Most eat from just 2 food groups, but the recommendation is 4 or more.

### Food groups consumed during a 24-hour period



For many, breastmilk (or a substitute) is the only protein source. Once weaned, there is no protein replacement:



## Findings: what helps & what impedes?

### Preferences

Households prioritise obtaining sufficient calories from staples:

- ▶ Once minimum energy needs (calories) are satisfied, variety can increase.

### Money & livelihoods

Higher income = greater variety of foods consumed:

- ▶ Consumption of meat/fish, fruits & vegetables is highly responsive to increased income.

How the income is earned matters:

- ▶ Income earned through selling crops / coffee & wage employment = more food consumed.

### Access to foods

Distance to markets & lack of availability of a variety of food (own-production or purchased) are impeding factors.

### Agricultural production

Households eat what they grow & grow what they eat.

- ▶ There is little incentive to change agricultural practices in the midst of limited tools, productive labour, water supply & access to markets.

### Information

Information *per se* is not the issue:

- ▶ Many households have received nutritional advice, but implementing the advice is difficult due to lack of money, access & practical / achievable solutions.

### Water & sanitation

Good nutritional practices may be easily undone through poor water & sanitation.

## Program implications

### Health & nutrition messages

- ▶ Targeted & achievable messages.
- ▶ Transition to solids may be a critical phase.

### Agriculture, livelihoods & markets

A focus on increasing incomes & access to markets is likely to lead to improved nutritional diversity.