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Introduction

Nutrition stands as a fundamental pillar of human health, development, and societal progress. It encompasses not only the biological processes that sustain life but also the cultural, economic, and political frameworks that shape food systems and dietary habits. In Mexico, the complexity of nutritional challenges - ranging from undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies to rising obesity rates - demands a multidimensional approach. Understanding nutrition as both a science and a discipline allows us to appreciate its role in shaping individual well-being and national health outcomes.

Definition and concept of Nutrition

Nutrition refers to the biological process through which organisms obtain and utilize food to maintain life. This process includes ingestion, digestion, absorption, transport, metabolism, and excretion of nutrients.

Nutrients are classified into macronutrients—such as carbohydrates, proteins, and fats—and micronutrients, which include vitamins and minerals. These elements are essential for energy production, growth, cellular repair, and immune function. The World Health Organization defines nutrition as “the intake of food, considered in relation to the body’s dietary needs,” emphasizing its centrality to health and development.

Nutrition as a Science and Discipline

Nutrition is both a scientific field and an applied discipline. As a science, it draws from physiology, biochemistry, molecular biology, and genetics to understand how nutrients affect bodily functions. As a discipline, it is applied in diverse areas such as medicine, public health, agriculture, education, and sports. Specialized branches include clinical nutrition, nutritional epidemiology, food science, and community nutrition.

These subfield contribute to the development of dietary guidelines, therapeutic interventions, and public health strategies aimed at improving nutritional status across populations.

Interdisciplinary Connections

The study and application of nutrition intersect with numerous other disciplines. In medicine, nutrition is vital for disease prevention and management, particularly in chronic conditions like diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Public health relies on nutritional science to design policies and interventions that address food, while economics insecurity and promote healthy eating.

Agriculture influences the availability and quality of food, while economics shapes access through pricing and income levels. Sociology and anthropology explore cultural food practices and their impact on dietary choices.

Education plays a crucial role in instilling lifelong habits that support nutritional well-being. These interdisciplinary connections highlight the multifaceted nature of nutrition and its relevance across societal domains.

The Importance of Nutrition in Mexico

In Mexico, nutrition has emerged as critical public health issue due to the coexistence of undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and overnutrition. This phenomenon, known as the triple burden of malnutrition, affects all age groups and socioeconomic strata. Undernutrition persists in urban areas. Marginalized communities, while obesity and related chronic diseases are increasingly prevalent in urban areas. Micronutrient deficiencies, particularly in iron and vitamin A, continue to impair cognitive and physical development in children. Addressing these challenges is essential for reducing healthcare costs, enhancing educational outcomes, and improving national productivity. Nutrition is not only a matter of individual health but also a determinant of social equity and economic resilience.

Nutritional status in Mexican Children, Adolescents, and Adults.

The nutritional landscape in Mexico reveals significant disparities across age groups. Among children aged 0 to 5 years, 13.9% suffer from stunting, 1.6% from wasting, and 8.1% are overweight. Exclusive breastfeeding rates remain low at 27%. Indicating gaps in early nutritional support.

Adolescents face a growing epidemic of overweight and obesity, with 42.9% affected. In adults, obesity rates reach 35.7% in women and 27% in men, while diabetes affects 12.7% of women and 11.9% of men. These statistics underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions that address both undernutrition and overnutrition, particularly in vulnerable populations.

Malnutrition and its Forms

Malnutrition encompasses a spectrum of conditions resulting from inadequate, excessive, or imbalanced nutrient intake. Undernutrition refers to insufficient energy or nutrient consumption, leading to stunting, wasting and underweight. Micronutrient deficiencies involve the lack of essential vitamins and minerals, contributes to obesity and metabolic disorders. In Mexico, food insecurity affects 55.5% of the population, with 22.6% experiencing moderate to severe insecurity. These figures reflect structural inequalities in food access and highlight the need for comprehensive nutritional policies.

Major Diseases Caused by Poor Nutrition

Poor nutrition is a major contributor to a wide range of diseases. Obesity increases the risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases...

and certain cancers. Inadequate intake of iron leads to anemia, while calcium and vitamin D deficiencies contribute to osteoporosis. High sodium consumption is linked to hypertension, and excessive sugar intake promotes insulin resistance. In children, malnutrition can cause developmental delays, weakened immunity, and increased susceptibility to infections. These conditions not only reduce quality of life but also place a heavy burden on healthcare systems and economic productivity.

conclusion

Nutrition is a dynamic and interdisciplinary science that plays a vital role in shaping health outcomes and societal well-being. In Mexico, the coexistence of undernutrition and obesity presents a complex challenge that requires coordinated action across sectors. By integrating nutrition into public policy, education, healthcare, and agriculture, the country can move toward a more equitable and ensuring access to healthy diets are essential steps in addressing the nation's nutritional crisis.

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