



▼ SHORT COMMUNICATION

URGENT NEED TO STALL THE RISE IN TRENDS OF HUNGER: WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

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ABSTRACT ►

The incidence of hunger is on the rise in the last 3 years and it has matched the trends which were existing 10 years earlier. These estimates reflect that we are quite slow in our progress to reduce all forms of malnutrition. All these trends and reversal in progress is an eye-opener that prompt and urgent measures have to be taken to stall the same and accomplish the Sustainable Development Goal of zero hunger. A major proportion of the existing problem can be attributed to the climate changes, which have accounted for the reduced production of major crops. Amidst, the rising trends of food insecurity and high prevalence of different forms of malnutrition, there is a clear target that loads of work needs to be done in the global mission to leave no one behind and accomplish the goals on food security. In conclusion, the trends of hunger across the world are alarming and there is an immense need to have a focused plan to reduce the prevalence of hunger and implement measures to improve the nutrition status of all.

Key Words: Hunger, Malnutrition, Climate

≡ INTRODUCTION

The incidence of hunger is on the rise in the last 3 years and it has matched the trends which were existing 10 years earlier.^[1] In-fact, according to the recent global estimates, in excess of 820 million people is hungry across the globe, of which 62.7% and 31.2% are from Asian and African region respectively.^[1,2] Moving further, 22%, 7% and 6% of the children less than 5 years are having stunting, wasting and overweight respectively.^[3]

■ GROUND REALITY AND THE ROLE OF CLIMATE

The available estimates reflect that we are quite slow in our progress to reduce all forms of malnutrition, and the similar facts are re-emphasized through high trends of anemia among women belonging to the reproductive age-group.^[1-3] All these trends and the reversal in progress is an eye-opener that prompt and urgent measures have to be taken to stall the same and accomplish the Sustainable

Development Goal of zero hunger by the year 2030.

^[1] A major proportion of the existing problem can be attributed to the climate changes, which have accounted for the reduced production of major crops.^[2-4] In-fact, in the absence of climate resilience, the problem is bound to increase in the coming years.^[2]

The available estimates depict a clear picture that the number of individuals who are undernourished are significantly high among nations affected by climate extremes.^[1-3] At the same time, the pattern of rainfall has also changed big time, which further augments the trends of hunger / undernourishment, especially among people who are dependent on agricultural systems that are very much affected by the amount of rain or the range of temperatures.^[1,3] It is quite obvious that any reduction in the agricultural production will account for increase in the cost, which thereby minimizes not only the availability, but even the access to food.^[2] On the other end of the spectrum, even the overweight & obesity trends are on the rise and a lot needs to be done to minimize the same.^[2,4]

NEED FOR AN URGENT PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE

Amidst, the rising trends of food insecurity and high prevalence of different forms of malnutrition, there is a clear target that loads of work needs to be done in the global mission to leave no one behind and accomplish the goals on food security.^[1,5] In order to attain the set target, it is high time that measures are taken to strengthen the agricultural system and improve the response of a nation to extremes of climate.^[2-4] There is a big time need to plan for those interventions which can minimize the problem of inaccessibility to the nutritious foods.^[1] In addition, the planned strategies should essentially target the vulnerable population groups and efforts have to be taken to bring about the shift towards those food systems that can ensure availability of food for all.^[1,2] On a similar note, measures have to be taken to ensure availability of food in regions affected by conflicts and humanitarian emergencies.^[5]

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the trends of hunger across the world are alarming and there is an immense need to have a focused plan to reduce the prevalence of hunger and implement measures to improve the nutrition status of all.

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