

At the time of Independence India had two major nutrition problems – (i) periodic famines due to poor agricultural production and lack of an appropriate distribution system and (ii) chronic undernutrition associated with food insecurity at the national, household and individual level. The Green Revolution ensured self-sufficiency in food grain production and PDS helped in the distribution of subsidized food grains to the poor across the country. In addition, focused food supplementation to vulnerable groups (ICDS and MDM) and interventions to improve micronutrient intake (IDD control programme, massive-dose Vitamin A supplementation and anaemia control programme) were initiated. Over the last four decades, there has been a progressive improvement in the infrastructure and manpower to implement these programmes and also in their content, quality and coverage. As a result, there has been a sustained reduction in the prevalence of undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies. However, the rate of decline has been slow. Even now, undernutrition, anaemia, and the adverse health consequences associated with these conditions on the mother— child dyad continues to be major public health problems among the billion plus Indian population.

The last two decades witnessed a progressive if relatively slow increase in prevalence of overnutrition and associated health problems. This was mainly due to reduction in physical activity in all segments of population. Increased consumption of calorie dense foods by affluent urban adolescents and youth contributed to the over-nutrition in these segments of the population. Calorie dense fried foods are inexpensive and tasty; therefore, the urban and rural poor also tend to eat them and are increasingly at risk of over-nutrition. Initially the rise in overnutrition was seen in the urban affluent segments of population. But recent data indicate that overnutrition is emerging as a problem in all age groups, in all segments of population, in all states, both in urban and rural areas. Longitudinal studies from India indicate that undernutrition in childhood can be a risk factor for overnutrition and non-communicable diseases during adult life.

Taking cognizance of the emergence of the dual-nutrition burden, especially, among the developing countries, WHO has revisited existing reference standards for assessment of nutritional status and have brought out the new/revised versions of references norms [RDA (2004), intrauterine growth standards (2013), multi-centre growth reference standards (2006), BMI standards for 6-18 years (2007), the proposed Asian standards for BMI in adults]. These are of great importance to India in its efforts to prevent, screen for, detect and combat dual nutrition burden and associated public health problems.

NFI is organising a symposium on "Reference standards for assessment of nutritional status" to discuss these and to come up with appropriate recommendations.



*The President and the Members of the
Governing Body of Nutrition Foundation of India
cordially invite you to attend*

*A Symposium
on
"Reference Standards for
Assessment of Nutritional Status"*

*Venue :
Lecture Hall
Nutrition Foundation of India
C13, Qutab Institutional Area, New Delhi 110016.*

*Date:
28th November 2014*