

World's Hunger and Obesity Both on the Rise: Time to Intervene

Saurabh RamBihariLal Shrivastava¹, Prateek Saurabh Shrivastava²

¹Medical Education Unit Coordinator and Member of the Institute Research Council, Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth – Deemed to be University, Ammapettai, Nellikuppam, Chengalpet District, Tamil Nadu, India,

²Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth – Deemed to be University, Ammapettai, Nellikuppam, Chengalpet District, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

In general, the public health concerns of obesity and hunger appears different, but in reality, the root cause of these problems is overlapping to a great extent. The findings of studies have indicated that childhood obesity and food insecurity can coexist, while in some children and youths, food insecurity has been linked with more risk of development of obesity. Considering the fact that a large section of human population is vulnerable to the threat of food insecurity, it is the need of the hour to take specific interventions to bridge the existing challenges. As the problem has deep roots within the existing system, the first and foremost thing will be to rope in all the concerned stakeholders and plan for a holistic approach. As maintenance of nutrition and ensuring adequate supply of food commodities is an integral aspect of elements of primary health care, the national government should design policies to warrant equitable distribution of food commodities. To conclude, the twin problem of hunger and obesity has demonstrated a significant rise in the different parts of the world. It is of utmost importance to acknowledge the problem as a public health priority and respond to the same in a concerted and organized manner.

Keywords: Obesity, hunger, World Health Organization

INTRODUCTION

In general, the public health concerns of obesity and hunger appears different, but in reality, the root cause of these problems is overlapping to a great extent. It is noteworthy that the concerns of hunger and undernourishment has found constant representation in the global development goals.^[1] However, with the passage of time and the adoption of unhealthy lifestyle behaviours, even the prevalence and distribution of obesity across different age-groups have shown a significant rise across the world. The findings of studies have indicated that childhood obesity and food insecurity can coexist, while in some children and youths, food insecurity has been linked with more risk of the development of obesity.^[2,3] As a matter of fact, the distribution of obesity and food insecurity has been found quite frequent in low- and middle-income nations.^[4]

BRIDGING THE EXISTING GAPS

Considering the fact that a large section of human population is vulnerable to the threat of food insecurity, it is the need of the hour to take specific interventions to bridge the existing

challenges.^[5] Moreover, it is quite clear that we are not on the right track to meet the set targets under the Sustainable Development Goals and thus active and urgent interventions are required.^[6] The emergence of coronavirus disease-2019 pandemic has impacted all the domains of human lives and the same stands true for food security and thus we have to take additional steps to come out of the existing crisis and eventually move forward in the right direction to accomplish the set targets.^[7]

MULTISECTORAL APPROACH

As the problem has deep roots within the existing system, the first and foremost thing will be to rope in all the concerned stakeholders and plan for a holistic approach. This essentially includes the involvement of international welfare organizations

Address for correspondence: Dr. Saurabh RamBihariLal Shrivastava, Professor, Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth (SBV) – Deemed to be University, Tiruporur - Guduvancherry Main Road, Ammapettai, Nellikuppam, Chengalpet District - 603 108, Tamil Nadu, India.
E-mail: drshrishri2008@gmail.com

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and other funding agencies that support the global initiative to stop food insecurity.^[3,5,8] There is an immense need to empower the general population, especially with regard to the adoption of correct lifestyles and unhealthy dietary practices, which play an immense role in increasing the prevalence of obesity. In the earlier ages, it is the responsibility of the parents and teachers in schools to educate the students about healthy practices and motivating them to adopt better dietary practices.^[6-8]

IMPROVEMENT OF THE FOOD SUPPLY AND ENVIRONMENT SANITATION

As maintenance of nutrition and ensuring adequate supply of food commodities is an integral aspect of elements of primary health care, the national government should design policies to warrant equitable distribution of food commodities. However, considering the fact that the basic problem lies in poverty, it is essential that steps are taken to ameliorate poverty and ensure consistent and adequate availability of food supply.^[5-7] In continuation, measures should be taken to improve the environment sanitation to avoid acquisition of intestinal infections, which then aggravate the possibility of malnutrition and the vicious cycle continues. In short, there is a significant need for stakeholders to be more responsible and be dedicated towards the better management of existing public health menace of hunger and obesity.^[4-8]

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the twin problem of hunger and obesity has demonstrated a significant rise in the different parts of the

world. It is of utmost importance to acknowledge the problem as a public health priority and respond to the same in a concerted and organized manner.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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