



The double burden of malnutrition and our responsibility as nutrition professionals

La doble carga de la malnutrición y nuestra responsabilidad como profesionales dedicados a la nutrición

O duplo fardo da malnutrição e nossa responsabilidade como profissionais dedicados à nutrição

Fanny Aldana, ND, PhD

<https://doi.org/10.35454/rncm.v3n2.198>

The Sustainable Development Goals marked a commitment for nations to achieve a world without hunger, with food security, and without malnutrition in any of its forms by the year 2030⁽¹⁾. Unfortunately, in 2018 there was a surge in undernourishment in Latin America and the Caribbean, which amounted to 42.5 million people with undernourishment and 187 million people affected by food insecurity⁽²⁾.

This undernourishment, which could have food insecurity as one of its causes, would be one of the determining factors for both malnutrition, and overweight and obesity⁽³⁾. This phenomenon is understood as a sustained and inadequate food intake leading to a deficient supply of energy, or a deficient supply of micronutrients as a consequence of an energy-dense or poorly balanced diet⁽⁴⁾.

The challenge is two-fold and substantial. It means facing the burden of malnutrition twice, by deficit as well as by excess, with the aggravation of the uncertainty related to the pandemic, which will probably cause an increase in food insecurity numbers as a consequence of the global economic emergency and disruptions in the food supply chain, which in turn have been impacted by the decrease in food harvesting, closure of food processing plants, and city and country borders. It is estimated that the number of people experiencing food insecurity

could double by the end of 2020 as a result of the current pandemic. This will have severe implications on nutritional status, and will probably lead to a nutritional crisis and an increase in chronic noncommunicable diseases.

Therefore, we are on the verge of a food emergency, which is defined as an extraordinary situation where people are not able to meet their basic needs to survive⁽⁵⁾. Health professionals dedicated to nutrition are essential actors in the identification of nutritional risk, prescription of healthy and balanced diets part of sustainable food systems⁽⁶⁾, and monitoring of nutritional status in all population settings.

The value of the current issue of *Revista de Metabolismo y Nutrición Clínica* lies not only in the variety of topics addressing a number of diets for specific conditions, but also in the fact that it was edited during the pandemic and confinement, a time when the authors made their best to present the best possible analysis of their results, and during which the editor and editorial committee persevered on their goal of moving forward with this purpose, which also led to having the journal indexed.

In 2050 there will be 10 billion inhabitants on our planet, and many will suffer from nutritional challenges. Let us be an example of tenacity, the same tenacity that Diana Cárdenas and her entire team has shown us.

Fanny Aldana was Associate Editor of the journal until March 2020. With enthusiasm and great judgement, she facilitated the consolidation of the journal during the stage prior to indexing. Her recommendations and insights related to research were very significant for the journal. The doors will always be open for you. Thanks Fanny!





Fanny Aldana-Parra, ND, PhD.

Nutritionist and Dietitian from the *Pontificia Universidad Javeriana*. Clinical epidemiologist from *Universidad El Bosque*. Doctor in Biological Sciences from the *Pontificia Universidad Javeriana*. Doctoral stay at the Institute of Child Health of University College London in the United Kingdom. She belongs to the group of thematic experts of Colciencias (Ministry of Health and Social Protection) participating the creation of Clinical Practice Guidelines for the diagnosis and prevention of obesity for the adult population in Colombia. Her lines of research are related to bariatric and metabolic surgery, risk factors for obesity, and efficient strategies in nutritional counselling. She is reviewer for Clinical Nutrition ESPEN, PlosOne, *Revista de la Facultad de Medicina de la Universidad Nacional*, and *Revista Colombiana de Pediatría*.

References

1. Griggs D, Stafford-Smith M, Gaffney O, Rockström, Öhman MC, Shyamsundar P, et al. Sustainable development goals for people and planet. *Nature*. 2013; 495: 305-7. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1038/495305a>.
2. World Health Organization. World Health Statistics: monitoring health for the SDGs, sustainable development goals [Internet]. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2018 [Fecha de consulta: 1 de agosto 2020]. Disponible en: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/272596>.
3. Wells JC, Sawaya AL, Wibaek R, Mwangome M, Poullas MS, Yajnik CS, et al. The double burden of malnutrition: aetiological pathways and consequences for health. *Lancet*. 2020;395(10217):75-88. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(19\)32472-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(19)32472-9).
4. FAO, FIDA, OMS, PMA y UNICEF. El estado de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición en el mundo 2019. Protegerse frente a la desaceleración y el debilitamiento de la economía [Internet]. Roma: FAO; 2019 [Fecha de consulta: 1 de agosto 2020]. Disponible en: <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5162es/ca5162es.pdf>
5. United Nations. Policy brief: The impact of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition [Internet]. June 2020 [Fecha de consulta: 1 de agosto 2020]. Disponible en: <https://www.tralac.org/documents/resources/covid-19/3813-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-food-security-and-nutrition-un-policy-brief-june-2020/file.html>.
6. Willett W, Rockström J, Loken B, Springmann M, Lang T, Vermeulen S, et al. Food in the Anthropocene: the EAT–Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems. *Lancet*. 2019;393(10170):447-92. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)31788-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)31788-4).