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AUTHORS

Dr K.V. Bailey, Regional Adviser in Nutrition, WHO Regional Office for Africa, Brazzaville, The People's Republic of the Congo

Dr S.J. Baker, Medical Officer, Christian Medical College Hospital, Vellore 4, India

Dr M.R. Barakat, formerly WHO Nutrition Adviser, Ministry of Health, Kabul, Afghanistan

Professor G.H. Beaton, Chairman, Department of Nutrition and Food Science, Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, Canada. Formerly Head, Department of Nutrition, School of Hygiene, University of Toronto

Dr M. Behar, Chief Medical Officer, Nutrition, WHO, Geneva, Switzerland

Dr J.M. Bengoa, Adviser to the National Nutrition Institute, Caracas, Venezuela. Formerly Chief Medical Officer, Nutrition, WHO, Geneva, Switzerland

Dr Bertlyn Bosley, formerly Adviser on Nutrition Education, WHO Regional Office for the Americas, Washington, DC, USA

Dr H.J.L. Burgess, Regional Adviser in Nutrition, WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific, Manila, Philippines

Dr F.W. Clements, School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, University of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Dr R. Cook, Director, Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute, Kingston, Jamaica

Dr E.M. DeMayer, Medical Officer, Nutrition, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland

Dr J.E. Gordon, Senior Lecturer in Epidemiology, Department of Nutrition and Food Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, USA

Dr R.E. Hodges, Professor of Internal Medicine, and Chief, Nutrition Section, University of California, Davis, CA, USA

Dr E. Katsura, Director, Kokura Memorial Hospital, Kita-Kyushu City, Japan

Dr M. Layrisse, Director, Department of Physiopathology, Venezuelan Institute of Scientific Research (IVIC), Caracas, Venezuela

Dr D. Morley, Senior Lecturer in Paediatrics, Institute of Child Health, Department of Child Health, University of London, England

Dr T. Osso, formerly Director, National Institute of Nutrition, Tokyo, Japan

Dr H.A.P.C. Oomen, Professor of Tropical Nutrition, Instituut voor Tropische Hygiene, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Dr V.N. Patwardhan, † Assistant Director, Nutrition and Biochemistry, United States Naval Medical Research Unit, Cairo. Formerly Chief Medical Officer, Nutrition, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland

† Dr Patwardhan died on 8 July 1971.
Professor L. Paunier, University Paediatric Clinic, Cantonal Hospital, Geneva, Switzerland

Dr A. Rabia, WHO Medical Officer, Project Kenya 4401, Nairobi, Kenya

Dr M. Roche, President of the National Council of Scientific and Technological Research (CONICIT), Estado Miranda, Venezuela

Dr F. Rosa, Director, School of Public Health, American University of Beirut, Lebanon

Dr R. Rueda-Williamson, Director-General, Instituto de Bienestar Familiar, Bogotá, Colombia. Formerly Regional Adviser in Nutrition, WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific

Dr F.T. Sai, Assistant Secretary General, International Planned Parenthood Federation, London, England

Professor J. Waterlow, Head, Department of Human Nutrition, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, England
REVIEWERS

Professor F.J. BENNETT, Professor of Community Health, University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya. Formerly Professor of Community Health, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Professor J.F. BROCK, Professor Emeritus of Medicine, Department of General Medicine, University of Cape Town and Groot Schuur Hospital, Observatory, Cape, South Africa

Dr R.C. BURGESS, formerly Chief Medical Officer, Nutrition, WHO, Geneva, Switzerland

Dr R. BUZINA, Head, Department of Nutrition, Institute of Public Health of Croatia, Zagreb, Yugoslavia

Dr D.B. COURSIN, Director of Research, St Joseph Hospital, Lancaster, PA, USA

Professor H.D. CREMER, Director, Institute of Nutrition Science, Giessen, Federal Republic of Germany

Dr H. DUPIN, Professor of Nutrition, École Nationale de la Santé publique, Rennes-Cedex, France

Dr G. FERRI-LUZZI, formerly Director, Division of Nutrition, Ministry of Health, Rome, Italy

Professor Y.R. GANDRA, Head, Department of Nutrition, School of Public Health, University of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

Dr GRACE A. GOLDSMITH, Dean, School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, School of Medicine, University of Tulane, New Orleans, LA, USA

Dr D.M. HEGSTED, Professor of Nutrition, School of Public Health, Harvard University, Boston, MA, USA

Dr O. JEANNET, Professor and Chairman, Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, University of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland

Dr D.B. JELLIFIT, Professor of Public Health and Pediatrics, and Head, Division of Population, Family and International Health, School of Public Health, University of California, Los Angeles, CA, USA

Dr J. KEVANY, Senior Lecturer in Social Medicine, Trinity College, University of Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

Dr M.C. LATHAM, Professor of International Nutrition, Graduate School of Nutrition, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, USA

Dr A. OMOULU, Director, Food Science and Applied Nutrition Unit, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

Dr J.M. PALACIOS-MATEOS, Professor of Endocrinology and Nutrition, Ciudad Sanitaria Provincial Francisco Franco, Madrid, Spain

Professor V. RAMALINGAM, Department of Pathology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, India

Professor N.S. SCRIMSHAW, Head, Department of Nutrition and Food Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, USA

Dr C.E. TAYLOR, Professor and Chairman, Department of International Health, School of Hygiene and Public Health, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, USA

Dr B. VÄHLQUIST, Professor of Paediatrics, University Hospital, Uppsala, Sweden
MEASUREMENT OF ENERGY

Since the joule (J) is now the accepted international unit of energy, the use of the term “calorie” as a synonym for “energy” has been discontinued. Thus in this monograph the term “protein-energy malnutrition” (PEM) replaces the term “protein-caloric malnutrition”, which has hitherto been in common use.

Conversion factors are:

\[ 1 \text{ cal} = 4.184 \text{ J} \]
\[ 1 \text{ J} = 0.239 \text{ cal} \]
\[ 1 \text{ 000 kcal} = 4.184 \text{ MJ} \]
\[ 1 \text{ MJ} = 239 \text{ kcal} \]
PREFACE

The importance of malnutrition and undernutrition as obstacles to social and economic development and as conditioning factors in a wide range of diseases is being increasingly recognized. Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of malnutrition because of their special food requirements. The high infant mortality rates from infectious disease in many of the developing countries are partly attributable to the poor nutritional status of the child population. Health care personnel and those employed in related services in those countries need a better knowledge and understanding of nutritional principles and problems so that they can attack malnutrition with confidence.

While many excellent textbooks on the fundamentals of nutrition and preventive medicine exist, few discuss at length the manifestations and control of malnutrition in the community. This monograph is intended to fill that gap. A number of topics are not dealt with because they are well covered in other publications; among them are dietotherapy, nutrition and dental health, food hygiene, food additives, and food economics. Similarly, it was felt that it would be premature, in a field expanding so rapidly, to make any attempt to summarize the state of knowledge about the relationship of nutrition to functional development, including mental development.

The reviewers, to whom WHO is most grateful and whose names are listed at the front of this monograph, made many valuable suggestions, which have been duly taken into account. Several urged that sociocultural factors and feeding practices in malnutrition should be discussed in detail, as well as operational programmes based on such considerations. The editors' view was that regional differences are so considerable that a balanced account of those topics would be difficult to achieve and that regional, national, and local guides are required to do justice to them.

The monograph is arranged in three main sections. Following an introductory chapter, the first part consists of 9 chapters covering the major deficiency syndromes, their treatment and prevention. The second part contains 4 chapters on the principles of epidemiology as applied to malnutrition. The third part contains 15 chapters dealing with approaches to the control of malnutrition in the community. Six annexes discuss at greater length selected topics of particular interest and importance.

In inviting authors to prepare the various chapters an attempt was made to obtain a wide selection of authoritative and expert opinion. Altogether, 26 authors have participated in this collaborative effort; to all of them WHO is greatly indebted. The two chapters on food production and distribution contributed by the Secretariat of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the
United Nations (FAO) are particularly welcome, being based on long and extensive experience and representing the kind of fruitful cooperation that can be achieved between various organizations and services with the common goal of solving major human problems.

This monograph is intended as a field guide for health workers, as a work of reference for planners, and as a teaching resource for students in medical schools and schools of public health, nursing, and allied fields and for those participating in some of the intensive short courses that have been instituted in recent years. It is hoped, too, that it will interest and stimulate professionals in the agricultural services, whose work is essential in efforts to improve nutritional status. Although the monograph is less relevant to the immediate needs of health professionals in the developed countries, where other aspects of malnutrition assume greater importance, many of the more general chapters could find a useful place in teaching curricula, especially in these times when a period of voluntary service in a developing country is regarded with favour by many newly graduating physicians and nurses.