



A Study Of Problem Of Malnutrition In India

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ABSTRACT

Malnutrition is a very serious problem and a major challenge facing underdeveloped and developing nations.

The root of malnutrition is primarily seen in poverty. The problem is more severe in countries with high poverty levels. At the same time, the problem is more acute in low-income countries. Although this problem is related to dietetics, it also has emotional, political, social, and economic dimensions. Nearly 50 percent of India's population lives below the poverty line. Malnutrition has become a major social problem. In our country, malnutrition is defined as a lack of food. This type of malnutrition is seen well below the poverty line.

Malnutrition is a complex condition that can have serious health consequences if left untreated. Understanding its causes, symptoms, and treatment options is essential for prevention and recovery. If you suspect that you or someone you know may be suffering from malnutrition, it is important to seek immediate medical advice.

Introduction

Malnutrition is a very serious problem and a major challenge facing underdeveloped and developing nations. The root of malnutrition is primarily seen in poverty. The problem is more severe in countries with high poverty levels. At the same time, the problem is more acute in low-income countries. Although this problem is related to dietetics, it also has emotional, political, social, and economic dimensions. Nearly 50 percent of India's population lives below the poverty line. Malnutrition has become a major social problem. In our country, malnutrition is defined as a lack of food. This type of malnutrition is seen well below the poverty line.

Malnutrition is a major global health problem that affects millions of people, regardless of age, gender, or geographic location. It refers to a condition that results from an unbalanced intake of nutrients, which leads to adverse health effects. Malnutrition can manifest as undernutrition, where individuals do not get enough nutrients, or overnutrition, where excessive intake leads to obesity and related health problems. Understanding malnutrition is extremely important, as it can have serious consequences on physical health, cognitive function, and overall quality of life.

Definition

What is malnutrition?

Malnutrition is a condition resulting from inadequate or unbalanced intake of nutrients, which can lead to health problems. It includes both inadequate intake of calories, protein, vitamins and minerals, and overnutrition, which is associated with excess calorie intake and obesity. Malnutrition can affect individuals of all ages, but it is particularly concerning for vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly and people with chronic illnesses.

Types of Malnutrition

Marasmus

This disease is mainly due to lack of calories. Symptoms appear when children are less than a year old. The child was very thin, only bones and wrinkled skin. The face looks like a person.

Sujawati (Quashi Oscar)

This disease is mainly due to protein deficiency. Symptoms appear after one year of age. Swelling on the legs and face, the color of the hair is yellow. Hair becomes thin and straight, skin color changes, the child looks pale, the child does not have much appetite, body development stops, the stomach stretches and the chest protrudes forward.

Vitamin A deficiency causes night blindness and eye disorders. Also, the skin looks dry and dry.

Anemia

Deficiency of iron, folic acid, vitamin B-6 and B-12 in diet causes disease. Decreases the amount of hemoglobin and blood cells in the blood. Adverse effects on growth, immunity and alertness of children.

Similar to the above four major diseases of malnutrition, vitamin B deficiency causes diseases such as beriberi and vitamin B deficiency, scurvy and vitamin D deficiency in children.

Relationship between malnutrition and disease

Malnutrition may develop in small children after exposure to TB, malaria, measles, frequent diarrhea. Specifically, T.B. And malaria is a chronic disease. In this illness, children lose their appetite and become malnourished. Malnutrition is due to lack of proper attention to the diet of children and children fall sick due to weak immune system. At the same time, neglect of diet during illness also increases malnutrition.

Infection due to malnutrition

- Poverty is one of the causes of malnutrition in children, but in the community, in the family, the problem is aggravated by ignorance about child nutrition, especially the need for breastfeeding. According to a 1981 survey conducted by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in rural and tribal areas, 77 percent of children in rural areas and 23 and 27 percent of children in tribal areas were victims of third and fourth grade malnutrition. Malnutrition makes children more susceptible to common infectious diseases such as measles, mumps, whooping cough, tetanus, measles and polio. But diseases caused by malnutrition and other deficiencies can also cause permanent disability. Infectious diseases among children are on the rise due to lack of safe drinking water and inadequate sanitation.
- Ignorance about health, poverty and poor nutrition can cause malnutrition in children. Malnutrition may lead to malnutrition. Further studies seem important in the context of malnutrition.
- Malnutrition is a problem in many developing countries. From the available statistical data, it is clear that 2.3 out of 800 million children growing up in developing countries suffer from diseases that develop debilitating diseases. Protein and calorie reduction have taken a serious turn.
- According to a report by the World Health Organization, the gap between malnutrition and infection is responsible for the health problems of children. This was found at the end of research on child mortality rate in India. Most children die due to infection but malnutrition is the main cause. Statistically, 84 percent of mothers breastfeed their babies from day one. Breastfeeding usually lasts six months. The duration of breastfeeding for mothers in selected areas under the Integrated Child Development Scheme was six months. The study found that 4.15 percent of children are malnourished.
- Despite tremendous progress in health, children in India remain far from satisfactory levels of health and nutrition. They have suffered from a host of health problems such as snake bites, infections, low birth weight, vitamin A deficiency, iron deficiency, malnutrition and tetanus.
- Malnutrition is increasing due to negligence of health and lack of healthy diet, ignorance and lack of health awareness. Anganwadi workers create health awareness and emphasize the importance of nutritious and complementary foods to prevent malnutrition.
- Diet of pregnant mothers and babies affects their health. Proper coordination of diet and health is essential. But because of lack of proper diet, health is deteriorating and the journey towards fasting has started. The following chapters will be important from the point of view of diet and health.
- Lack of nutritious food in children in this country is a common thing. There are many children who suffer from malnourishment if medical help is sought. Children are more likely to have pneumonia. This means that children who are malnourished and who are haunted do not pay much attention to the visible symptoms.

How to solve the problem of malnutrition

- Malnutrition and poverty are two sides of the same coin. The problem of malnutrition is most prevalent where poverty exists. Governments try to fight malnutrition through various programs and in this order provide essential nutrients to children.
- Food fortification (Thvak Thwatjappipbanjapavd) provides essential nutrients to children's food but this food fortification is limited to some popular food items. If this food fortification is also done for milk, vegetable oil, flour and sugar, significant progress can be made in efforts to eliminate the problem of malnutrition.

Causes and risk factors

Infectious/environmental causes

Some infectious agents and environmental factors can contribute to malnutrition. For example, gastrointestinal infections can cause diarrhea, which can lead to nutrient loss and difficulty in absorption. In addition, environmental factors such as food insecurity, lack of access to clean water and poor sanitation can exacerbate malnutrition, particularly in low-income regions.

Genetic/autoimmune causes

Some individuals are genetically predisposed to malnutrition because they have inherited conditions that affect nutrient absorption or metabolism. For example, celiac disease is an autoimmune disorder that prevents the proper absorption of nutrients from food. Other genetic disorders such as phenylketonuria (PKU) can also contribute to malnutrition if dietary restrictions are not followed.

Lifestyle and dietary factors

Lifestyle and dietary habits play an important role in the development of malnutrition. Poor dietary choices, such as consuming too much processed food and too little fruit and vegetables, can lead to nutrient deficiencies. In addition, factors such as a sedentary lifestyle, excessive alcohol consumption, and smoking can further contribute to malnutrition.

Key Risk Factors

A number of risk factors can increase the likelihood of malnutrition, including:

- Age: Young children, the elderly, and infants are particularly vulnerable.
- Gender: Women, especially during pregnancy and breastfeeding, may have increased nutritional needs.
- Geographic location: Areas where access to nutritious food is limited are at higher risk.
- Underlying conditions: Chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, and gastrointestinal disorders can affect nutrient absorption and metabolism.
- Socioeconomic status: Individuals with low incomes may struggle to access healthy food options.

Symptoms

Common Symptoms of Malnutrition Malnutrition can cause a variety of symptoms, which vary depending on the type and severity of the condition. Common symptoms include:

- Unintentional weight loss: Significant weight loss without effort.
- Fatigue: Constant tiredness and lack of energy.
- Weakness: Decreased muscle strength and endurance.
- Poor concentration: Difficulty concentrating or mental confusion.
- Dry skin and hair: Changes in skin texture and hair loss.
- Edema: Swelling or puffiness in the legs and abdomen.
- Frequent infections: Increased susceptibility to illness.

Warning Signs

Some symptoms may indicate a need for immediate medical attention, including:

- Sudden weight loss: more than 5% of body weight in a month.
- Persistent vomiting or diarrhea.
- Signs of dehydration: dry mouth, dizziness.
- Confusion or extreme fatigue.
- Swelling in the abdomen or legs.

Diagnosis

Clinical Evaluation

Diagnosis of malnutrition usually begins with a thorough clinical evaluation. Healthcare providers will take a detailed history of the patient, including dietary habits, medical history, and any underlying health conditions. A physical examination will assess for signs of malnutrition, such as weight loss, muscle weakness, and skin changes.

Diagnostic Tests

A number of diagnostic tests may be used to confirm malnutrition, including:

- Laboratory tests: Blood tests to check for vitamin, mineral, and protein deficiencies.
- Imaging studies: X-rays or CT scans to check body composition and identify any underlying conditions.
- Special procedures: In some cases, endoscopy may be used to evaluate the gastrointestinal tract.

Differential Diagnosis

Healthcare providers will also consider other conditions that can mimic malnutrition, such as eating disorders, chronic infections, and metabolic disorders. A comprehensive evaluation is necessary to ensure an accurate diagnosis.

Treatment Options

Medical Treatment

Treatment for malnutrition often involves addressing the underlying cause and restoring nutritional balance. Medical treatments may include:

- Nutritional Supplements: High-calorie and high-protein supplements can help individuals meet their nutritional needs.

- Medications: In some cases, medications may be prescribed to treat underlying conditions that are causing malnutrition.
- Surgical options: For individuals with gastrointestinal disorders, surgery may be necessary to improve nutrient absorption.

Non-pharmacological treatments

Non-pharmacological approaches are equally important in the management of malnutrition. These may include:

- Dietary changes: A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins is essential.
- Lifestyle changes: Malnutrition can be prevented by encouraging regular physical activity and healthy eating habits.
- Alternative treatments: Some individuals may benefit from complementary treatments, such as nutritional counseling or support groups.

Special considerations

Different populations may require tailored approaches to treatment:

- Pediatric: Children may require special formulas or fortified foods to meet their growth and development needs.
- Geriatric: The elderly may need assistance with meal preparation and may benefit from nutrient-rich foods to counteract age-related changes in metabolism.

Complications

Potential complications

If left untreated, malnutrition can lead to a number of complications, including:

- Impaired immune function: Increased susceptibility to infections and diseases.
- Delayed wound healing: Slow recovery from injuries and surgeries.
- Muscle weakness: Increased risk of falls and fractures, especially in the elderly.
- Cognitive decline: Possible memory problems and cognitive impairment.

Short-term and long-term complications

Short-term complications may include fatigue and weakness, while long-term complications may lead to long-term health problems such as heart disease, diabetes, and osteoporosis. Early intervention is crucial to prevent these adverse outcomes.

Prevention

Strategies for prevention

Preventing malnutrition involves a multifaceted approach, which includes:

- Balanced diet: Promoting a diet rich in essential nutrients.
- Regular health check-ups: Regular check-ups can help identify nutritional deficiencies early.
- Vaccinations: Following vaccinations can prevent infections that can lead to malnutrition.
- Hygiene practices: Promoting good hygiene can reduce the risk of gastrointestinal infections.

Lifestyle changes

Incorporating healthy lifestyle changes such as regular physical activity and stress management can also play a significant role in preventing malnutrition.

Prognosis and long-term outlook

General course of the disease

The prognosis of individuals with malnutrition largely depends on the underlying causes and timely intervention. With appropriate treatment, many individuals can make a full recovery and regain their health.

Factors Affecting Prognosis

A number of factors can affect the overall prognosis, including:

- Early diagnosis: Early identification and treatment of malnutrition can lead to better outcomes.
- Treatment adherence: Following medical advice and dietary recommendations is crucial for recovery.
- Underlying health conditions: Chronic illnesses can complicate recovery and require ongoing management.

It is extremely important to seek immediate medical attention if you experience any of the following serious symptoms:

- Severe weight loss: more than 5% of body weight in a month.
- Persistent vomiting or diarrhea.
- Signs of dehydration: dry mouth, dizziness.
- Confusion or extreme fatigue.
- Swelling in the abdomen or legs.

Efforts made by Government of India

The Ministry of Women and Child Development has created several schemes setting standards for child nutrition.

- National Guidelines on Infant and Young Child Feeding: These guidelines emphasize the importance of breastfeeding.
- National Nutrition Policy: This policy was adopted by the Government of India in 1993 under the auspices of the Department of Women and Child Development. It advocated a multi-sectoral plan to eradicate malnutrition and achieve the goal of optimal nutrition for all. The scheme advocates monitoring the level of nutrition across the country and sensitizing the government machinery on the need for good nutrition and the need to prevent malnutrition. The National Nutrition Policy also includes the Diet and Nutrition Board, which develops posters, audio jingles and video spots to disseminate the correct facts regarding breastfeeding and complementary feeding.
- Coordinated Child Development Seva Yojana: This is one of the most comprehensive schemes for child development in the entire country and perhaps the world. This scheme has been run since 1975 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in accordance with the National Policy on Children. It aims to provide integrated services for pre-school children to ensure proper growth and development of children in rural, tribal and slum areas. This centrally sponsored scheme also monitors child nutrition.
- Udish: Udish ka meaning hota hai naye bhor ki pelhi Kiran. This is a World Bank assisted Women and Child Development Project. The aim of this program is to train child care workers across the country.
- National Policy for Children: It stipulates that adequate services shall be provided by the State for the full physical, mental and social development of children in their pre-natal and post-natal (both) and developmental stages.
- National Declaration for Children: According to it, the Government of India's commitment to children's right to survival, health and nutrition, standard of living, sports and leisure, early childhood care, punishment, safety of the girl child, empowerment of the adolescent, quality life and freedom, name and nationality, freedom of expression, partnership (association) and peaceful assembly and protection from economic exploitation and all forms of abuse is emphasized.
- National Plan of Action for Children: This plan includes goals, objectives, plans and activities to improve child nutrition, reduce infant mortality, increase enrollment ratio, reduce drop-out rates, widen early childhood education and expand immunization coverage.

Conclusion

Malnutrition is a complex condition that can have serious health consequences if left untreated. Understanding its causes, symptoms, and treatment options is essential for prevention and recovery. If you suspect that you or someone you know may be suffering from malnutrition, it is important to seek immediate medical advice.

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