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ROUND TABLE TITLE:

CRD14: BIO-MEDICAL, EPIDEMIOLOGICAL, PUBLIC HEALTH AND NUTRITIONAL STUDIES

TRIPLE BURDEN OF MALNUTRITION IN INDIA AND ITS ASSOCIATED FACTORS: A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY TO COMBAT MALNUTRITION FOR BETTER PUBLIC HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

Assessment of nutritional status of a population and identification of specific causes and contributing factors to malnutrition are essential to implement relevant interventions. Malnutrition is the major public health problem in India. It refers to deficiencies, excesses, or imbalances in a person's intake of energy and/or nutrients in the body. It manifests itself in three groups of conditions which include under nutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and over nutrition. Countries like India which are undergoing nutritional and lifestyle transitions are struggling with the triple burden of malnutrition. For decades, high levels of maternal and child undernutrition and anaemia continues to be the major concern in India. Iodine, vitamin A, vitamin D deficiencies represent a major threat to the health and development of children and pregnant women in the country. At the same time co-consequences of industrialization and urbanization resulting in improved standard of living and rise in consumption of Junk food has enhanced rate of obesity and abnormal weight gain in childhood and adulthood. NFHS-5 data shows, 7.7% of children are severely wasted, 19.3% are wasted and 35.5% are stunted. At the same time, 3.4% children are overweight which was 2.1% in NFHS-4. Data on anaemia raises another troubling data that shows rising prevalence of anemia among children under five years that was recorded at 67.1% in NFHS vis-à-vis 58.6% reported in NFHS-4. Further distressing is NFHS-5 data that records 57% of women of reproductive age being anaemic in the country. This data is certainly not complimenting the story of economic growth the country has witnessed since policies of economic liberalization were introduced in the last decade of the 20th century. There are several national programmes to combat this menace of undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and obesity but results dismal. Two years of Covid 19 pandemic has added to the existing burden. The health policy makers are faced with the burden of providing resources for the control and prevention of both the existing communicable diseases and increasing number of non-communicable diseases. Malnutrition has been correlated with immune system alterations and susceptibility to diseases. The proposed roundtable aims to discuss various aspects of malnutrition with respect to biological and cultural perspectives, among children and adults, understand the associated factors responsible for it and propose a comprehensive strategy to combat this menace for better public health.

Keywords: Malnutrition, Micronutrient deficiencies, obesity.

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