

Letter to Editor

Clinical Nutrition and Health

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Received: 02 Oct 2023 | Revised: 07 Jun 2024 | Accepted: 18 Jun 2024 | Published Online: 28 Jun 2024

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ISSN 2816-8119

Open Access

Citation

Mustafa N. (2024).
Clinical Nutrition and
Health. *Albus Scientia*,
2024, Article ID e240628
1-2.

DOI

<http://doi.org/10.56512/AS.2024.1.e240628>

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Competing interests

The author has declared
that no competing
interests exist.

Dear Editor,

Clinical nutrition has yet to find its place in the society, primarily due to the lack of awareness regarding its essential role in people's lives. The landscape and dynamics of nutrition transition are exceptionally complex, with clinical management standing out as a significant factor. Numerous other factors contribute to this lack of awareness, including historic educational bias in therapeutic intervention, time constraints, incompetence in the field of nutrition, public confusion, ambiguity within the medical community about whose role it is to address clinical nutrition in a medical team, and individual's uncertainty about whom to consult for health advice.

The Greatest Generation (1911-1944), Baby Boomers (1946-1965), Generation X (1966- 1986) were aware and concerned about the diets, nutrients and healthy foods that contributed to a healthy life. Due to change in dietary habits and lack of awareness about nutritional nutrients importance there is a changing pattern to the health due to nutrition that impacts the health and life span. In developed countries like USA, new opportunities have been made available for healthcare professionals trained in clinical nutrition, who emphasize the significance of the field in patient care, since many developed countries have taken the importance of this filed into consideration.

Clinical nutrition (CN) is an environmental science that ensures a balanced dietary source, and maintenance of health (Sanchez et al., 2015). CN uses supplements composed of good basic micronutrients that are not part of the regular diet due to malnutrition or other dietary reasons in the prevention of diseases and good health. CN is an essential component of clinical treatment of acute and chronic diseases. Acute and chronic diseases like anemia, bowel syndrome, cancer, CKD, CVD, gastrointestinal diseases, obesity, pulmonary diseases, thyroid diseases, stroke, and other cognitive diseases (Sanchez et al., 2015), significantly affect the food intake and its metabolism leading to associated morbidity. The awareness about the role of nutrition in health, can only transpire if a person properly focuses on its nutrition and is aware of the effects the nutrition has in their lives. Besides awareness, the significant part to understand regarding nutrition is about beneficial nutrients, that may be person specific. Nutrients are the substances derived from food after digestion, used as source of energy, structural components of different organic compounds, involved in growth and repair of the tissues, organs and body and responsible to protect the body from diseases. Some of the nutrients that the cells cannot prepare, and these are required through diet are referred as essential nutrients. One can classify the nutrients to two categories: macronutrients and micronutrients. Macronutrients includes organic compounds like carbohydrates, proteins and fats whereas micronutrients include minerals, K, Rb Mg, Ca²⁺, CO₄²⁻, riboflavin etc. and vitamins. Each nutrient has a specified Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) which the requirements of healthy people at a specific lifetime in a specific gender.

To reveal the importance of clinical nutrition, different methods are used to collect the data like survey, disease management, disease-food comparison, and questionnaire methods at a clinical facility, research site, health care providers in hospitals at different community levels (Maschke et al., 2017). The benefit derived from these observations is the realization that a significant portion of the population lacks awareness about clinical nutrition. Many individuals remain uninformed about the critical importance of nutrition, encompassing essential nutrients vital for the body like importance of folic acid, Vit. B12 for brain development. Over the period of time body gets deprived of the nutrients that has to be taken as supplements. CN helps to supplement the diet with required nutrients at any specific age. It is worth mentioning that only 30-40% people are well aware of the importance of nutrition, leaving behind a large population to suffer from acute to chronic diseases due to poor dietary habits (World Health Organization, 2020).

In developed countries a large portion of population relies upon processed canned food due to their lifestyle (Daegeon, 2020). These diets lack the fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat free or low-fat dairy products raise concerns regarding the health (Oh et al 2020). It has been reported that 5 out of 6 leading causes of death among American population are related to poor quality of dietary patterns and diets (Daegeon, 2020; Bruening et al., 2015).

Malnutrition in cancer patients has been reported associated with poor prognosis (Sánchez-Sánchez et al. 2023). Nutritional support and evaluation for cancer patients has already been recommended (Yim et al., 2017, Sánchez-Sánchez et al. 2023). It has been reported that cancer patients do suffer from malnutrition due to eating problems, that acts as a significant predictor to the mortality.

It is perplexing that nutrition education is often overlooked by medical or health professionals, and education institutes. Despite the availability of literature, the practitioner fails to prioritize comprehensive nutrition education. An awareness program and campaigns regarding importance of Clinical Nutrition is the need of time which will help the communities in improving their quality of life by improving their nutrition.

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