

A future direction for tackling malnutrition

Today's publication of the WHO Series on the Double Burden of Malnutrition comes after 12 months of *Lancet* articles exploring nutrition in all its forms. In January, we published two complementary Commissions—*Food in the Anthropocene: the EAT-Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems* and *The Global Syndemic of Obesity, Undernutrition, and Climate Change*. In May and August, we published two Global Burden of Diseases nutritional studies in *The Lancet* and *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*. With these and other articles across *Lancet* journals throughout 2019, it has become clear that nutrition and malnutrition need to be approached from multiple perspectives, and although findings have sometimes converged, there is still work to be done to understand malnutrition's multiple manifestations.

The double burden of malnutrition is the coexistence of overnutrition (overweight and obesity) alongside undernutrition (stunting and wasting), at all levels of the population—country, city, community, household, and individual. The four Series papers and Comment

published today explore how this coexistence is affecting low-income and middle-income countries. Malnutrition in its many forms has previously been understood and approached as a separate public health issue, but the new emergent reality is that undernutrition and overnutrition are interconnected and, therefore, double-duty actions that simultaneously address more than one dimension must be implemented for policy solutions to be effective. Today's Series also explores the historical and biological aspects of the double burden of malnutrition and provides new economic analysis.

WHO has been gradually repositioning itself to adapt to this new nutrition reality of multiple targets across varied manifestations, moving away from a siloed approach. In convening this Series with *The Lancet*, WHO has united political will with new intellectual insights. With 6 years remaining in the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, this Series and Comment define the future direction required to achieve the global goal of eradicating hunger and preventing malnutrition in all its forms. ■ *The Lancet*



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Published Online
December 15, 2019
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(19\)33099-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(19)33099-5)

See Online/Series
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(19\)32497-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(19)32497-3),
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(19\)32472-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(19)32472-9),
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(19\)32506-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(19)32506-1),
and [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(19\)32473-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(19)32473-0)