

In this issue

Assessment and analysis as precursors to action

Assessing nutritional status and analysing the determinants of nutrition problems are critical formative stages in the development of interventions to enhance public health nutrition. Consistent with the new paper categories introduced by the journal in 2010, a number of noteworthy papers in this issue address aspects of nutrition assessment and explore determinants of nutrition behaviours.

Biomarkers of seafood intake

Biomarkers represent measures that can be used to enhance the assessment of dietary exposures and validate dietary intake methods and instruments. In this issue, Brantsæter *et al.*⁽¹⁾ report on a study that explored whether selenium, iodine, mercury or arsenic may serve as a biomarker for total fish and seafood intake, in addition to the traditionally used EPA and DHA. The study indicates that blood arsenic levels as a biomarker best reflected lean fish and seafood intakes.

Still on seafood, Lucas *et al.*⁽²⁾ present research quantifying and comparing marine food consumption among Quebecers with recent recommendations. They find that consumption of marine foods and EPA and DHA appears lower than international recommendations. However, Brantsæter *et al.*'s paper suggests the up-side of this finding is that their arsenic intake may be lower as a result.

Assessing physical activity

Assessing physical activity has great relevance to the assessment of nutritional and overall health status. Bharathi *et al.*⁽³⁾ present a validation study of a physical activity questionnaire against accelerometry and a 24h physical activity diary among villagers in South India.

New methods

Readers with an interest in epidemiological studies of diet among children should note the paper in this issue by Stiegler *et al.*⁽⁴⁾, who report on the systematic development of a new FFQ designed to measure the intake of fatty acids and antioxidants in children.

Determinants analysis

Studies that identify determinants of dietary behaviours or nutrition and health status outcomes help focus intervention development. Kanaan and Afifi⁽⁵⁾ describe the determinants of weight-control behaviours among adolescents in Beirut and show that determinants vary by gender. Kulkarni *et al.*⁽⁶⁾ explore the determinants of compliance to antenatal micronutrient supplementation in rural Nepal. Both studies provide intelligence to support intervention design and re-design with a view to enhanced intervention effectiveness.

Now look at your dog

The innovative paper by Nijland *et al.*⁽⁷⁾ takes the concept of a biomarker of nutritional status to a new level. In this case the biomarker is the family dog, whose body composition and adiposity, when overweight, appear to mirror that of its human owner. If you have a fat dog, this might just be the evidence you need to take the dog for more walks.

Roger Hughes
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