

Sub-theme 2.3. Nutrition, Food Safety and Security, Dietetics, and Nutritional Problems

Rationale

Good nutrition is vital for healthy development of humans. It depends not only on eating enough food, but also on a balanced diet constituting all essential nutrients based on sound knowledge of nutrition.

However, Ethiopia is renowned for problems associated with food and nutritional insecurity. There is a high degree of malnutrition in the country. Both macro and micro nutrient deficiencies are an issue of great concern. Children especially suffer from stunting, wasting and being under-weight. Pregnant and lactating mothers suffer from serious micro nutrient deficiencies. With an increase in urbanisation and family income, obesity is also becoming an issue in urban areas, and diseases associated with obesity are also increasing.

Aim

The main aim of this sub-theme is to conduct research on proper nutrition, malnutrition and determinants of malnutrition, food safety, and diet therapy.

Description

Under this research sub-theme are studied food safety and wholesomeness in its production, storage, preparation, distribution, sale, and consumption. The sub-theme is meant for finding the means to safeguard quality of food from production to consumption. The sub-theme also focuses on food contamination by chemicals, toxins, and pathogenic microorganisms; food safety assurance and sanitary measures; and dietary practices. Under-nutrition, obesity, overweight and micronutrient deficiencies, and prevention and treatment of malnutrition at all levels are studied under this research area. The sub-theme gives a particular attention to developing effective strategies for nutrition interventions during pregnancy, lactation, early infancy, childhood, and adolescence in both rural and urban areas, and focuses on how best to tackle micronutrient deficiencies.

Potential Collaborators

WHO, UNICEF, FAO, federal and regional health offices, CRDA, Action Aid

Expected Output

- Up-to-date knowledge about nutritional status of the population with particular emphasis on pregnant and lactating women, and children under the age of five
- Better knowledge on balanced nutrition
- Better awareness on food safety
- Identification of highly nutritive food for general and targeted population group
- Enhanced technology on food preparation and serving
- Improved technology on food addition, fortification, and preservation
- Improved technology on food storage and food transfer
- Improved strategy in place for food safety measures
- Enhanced algorithm on food therapy for clients on diet treatment

Research Areas

2.3.1. Proper nutrition and food safety

This research area focuses on studies targeting consumption of proper food and balanced diet throughout the life span. A particular focus will be given to vulnerable population groups such as lactating and pregnant women, children under the age of five, adolescents, and the elderly. Food preparation, preservation, fortification, and serving are included in this research area. Contaminations of food with chemical and microbial substances and its safety for serving are also the subject of this research area. In addition, identification of edible substances and promotion of its use is also studied under this research area. Furthermore, the research area includes food contamination by toxins, drugs, and biological residues.

2.3.2. Malnutrition and food security

This research area focuses on identifying the nutritional status of population groups and food security at individual, family, regional and national levels. Nutritionally affected population groups will be given a particular focus. Both macro and micro nutrient deficiencies are dealt with under this research area.

2.3.3. Food therapy and dietetics

The research area focuses on food therapy and food preparation in relation to a disease condition of an individual. Food therapy for nutritionally affected groups, particularly children under the age of five and pregnant and lactating women will be given a particular attention. Nutrition palliative therapies in clinical setting for diabetic, hypertensive, and pregnant women will also be studied under this research area. The research area also deals with diet therapy for clients with chronic illnesses like cancer and degenerative diseases.

Beneficiary

Women, children, farming and agro-pastoral communities, industries, the scientific community, policy makers, and the wider community