

Nutrition and climate change: A scoping review of current state of play

This is a summary of the following report: *Bush A, Wrottesley S, Mates E & Fenn B (2022) Nutrition and Climate Change - Current State of Play: Scoping Review.* www.ennonline.net/nutritionandclimatechange



Findings

The report provided an overview of the international architecture around climate change and how this related to nutrition. It presented the evidence base for the effects of climate change on nutrition outcomes, outlined current actions linking nutrition and climate change and identified multiple opportunities for strengthening linkages between nutrition and climate change according to KIIs.

In summary, nutrition and climate change are inextricably linked through complex, multidirectional pathways. Populations vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change are also those most vulnerable to undernutrition – women, children and poorer, rural households, particularly those living in fragile and conflict-affected states. While interest in, and awareness of, the climate crisis is growing, efforts to combat it are not yet resulting in the required political action to limit global warming to agreed levels. Although many gaps remain, evidence for the negative effects of climate change on undernutrition is growing. It is predicted that the biggest threat to health from climate change is via undernutrition. Actions to strengthen linkages are currently limited but do appear to be increasing. Health and gender can provide useful entry points for integrating nutrition into global climate change conceptual frameworks and national level commitments. Future efforts need to focus on more holistic systems approaches to address the huge threat that climate change poses to achieving universal healthy sustainable diets and well-nourished populations.

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges facing both current and future generations. In a world where undernutrition is declining very slowly and overnutrition is increasing rapidly, climate change will have severe and multifaceted effects on nutritional status and therefore on survival, health and development. Climate change and nutrition have overlapping agendas and enhanced collaboration could generate a common agenda for both communities.

This report presented the findings from a scoping review conducted by Emergency Nutrition Network (ENN) between January and November 2021. The review explored existing linkages between nutrition and climate change as well as examining if, and how, linkages could be strengthened and where related efforts to address climate change would be best placed. A series of 21 key informant interviews (KIIs) with stake-

holders working in climate change and/or nutrition were conducted to gain an understanding of the available evidence, current activities, gaps and opportunities. Based on the focal areas identified during stakeholder engagement, the available literature was reviewed. The literature review was therefore thorough but not systematic and the evidence presented was not exhaustive. While it was recognised that climate change and nutrition were broad topics with links to many sectors, the themes, actions and gaps presented in the report were centred around health because the work of many key informants (KIs) focused on this sector and health was the main delivery platform for many nutrition interventions. Similarly, the findings concentrated on the impacts of climate change on nutrition outcomes, rather than those of nutrition on climate change, as these aligned best with the perspectives and experiences of both the KIs and ENN.

Women's nutrition

This is a summary of the following report: *Philip T. James, Stephanie V. Wrottesley, Natasha Lelijveld, Eilise Brennan, Bridget Fenn, Rachael Menezes and Emily Mates. (2022). Women's Nutrition: A summary of evidence, policy and practice including adolescent and maternal life stages.* www.ennonline.net/womensnutritionsummarytechnicalbriefingpaper



Malnutrition disproportionately affects women and girls, with more than 1 billion women globally experiencing at least one form of malnutrition. This report brings together global targets and guidelines for women's nutrition, summarises the nutritional vulnerabilities of adolescent girls and women, provides a review of the evidence surrounding current nutrition interventions, highlights the remaining gaps and finishes with recommended actions needed to improve nutritional status for women and girls.

The authors summarised the global targets aimed at reducing maternal mortality, reducing the prevalence of anaemia in women 15 to 49 years of age and addressing the nutritional needs of pregnant and lactating women and girls. The authors then identified several guidelines that include the nutrition of adolescent girls and women. However, numerous gaps exist with guidelines for humanitarian contexts being particularly patchy. While the coverage of nutrition interventions for adolescent girls and women was largely not well documented, several interventions do exist. These include direct nutrition interventions such

as macronutrient and micronutrient supplementation and food fortification and indirect interventions such as nutrition education and counselling, social protection programmes, sexual and reproductive health services, the treatment and management of communicable and non-communicable diseases, mental health services, breastfeeding support, nutrition-sensitive agriculture and women's empowerment interventions.

In reviewing the evidence, interventions and guidelines, the authors identified several key gaps including:

1. Navigating and finding the latest guidelines on nutrition for adolescent girls and women is challenging.
2. There is a lack of evidence and guidance on pre-conception nutrition especially for adolescents.
3. Global and national indicators are heavily focused on infant and child outcomes rather than outcomes for the mother herself.
4. There is a lack of guidance and clarity on the assessment of nutritional status in adolescent girls and women including: (1) no optimal, context-specific mid-upper-arm circumference

cut-off for wasting; (2) no routine collection of dietary adequacy indicators; and (3) a lack of global data on gestational weight gain.

5. There are contrasting interpretations of the evidence base for whether iron-folic acid or multiple micronutrient supplementation should be used in pregnancy. There is also a lack of understanding of the best ways to improve adherence to supplementation.
6. There are gaps in the guidelines for macronutrient supplementation in undernourished women: 1) there is no World Health Organization guideline on identifying and treating adult moderate and severe wasting; 2) the relatively new guidance on balanced energy protein supplementation lacks detail and implementation guidance; 3) there is lack of guidance on mitigating the risks related to the double burden of malnutrition and non-communicable diseases.
7. There is a lack of indirect nutrition interventions for adolescent girls and women including: (1) a lack of gender empowerment in nutrition programmes; (2) a lack of research, screening tool(s) and intervention packages linking maternal mental health and nutrition; and (3) a lack of interventions focusing on the impact of climate change on nutrition.
8. There is a lack of integration of nutrition services within health systems.

The report was launched at a webinar with a panel of experts sharing their reflections. The webinar is available at: <https://www.ennonline.net/mediahub/video/webinaronwomensnutritionjan2022>