The Role of Public Health Nutrition in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the Asia Pacific Region

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Abstract

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015, which included several goals and targets primarily related to nutrition: to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger and to reduce child mortality and improve maternal health. In the Asia Pacific Academic Consortium for Public Health (APACPH) member countries as a group, infant and child mortality were reduced by more than 65% between 1990 and 2015, achieving the MDG target of a two-thirds reduction, although these goals were not achieved by several smaller countries. The SDGs are broader in focus than the MDGs, but include several goals that relate directly to nutrition: 2 (zero hunger—food), 3 (good health and well-being—healthy life), and 12 (responsible consumption and production—sustainability). Other SDGs that are closely related to nutrition are 4 and 5 (quality education and equality in gender—education and health for girls and mothers, which is very important for infant health) and 13 (climate action). Goal 3 is "good health and well-being," which includes targets for child mortality, maternal mortality, and reducing chronic disease. The Global Burden of Disease Project has confirmed that the majority of risk for these targets can be attributed to nutrition-related targets. Dietary Guidelines were developed to address public health nutrition risk in the Asia Pacific region at the 48th APACPH 2018 conference and they are relevant to the achievement of the SDGs. Iron deficiency increases the risk of maternal death from haemorrhage, a cause of 300,000 deaths worldwide each year. Improving diets and iron supplementation are important public health interventions in the APACPH region. Chronic disease and the burden in the APACPH region are important challenges and health interventions are needed.