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Editorial

"Nutrition in Oral Health" Why is too Important?

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"To eat is a necessity, but to eat intelligently is an art".

La Rochefoucald

Nutrition is the science that interprets the interaction of nutrients and other substances in food in relation to maintenance, growth, reproduction, health and disease of an organism. It includes food intake, absorption, assimilation, biosynthesis, catabolism and excretion [1].

According to the WHO, Nutrition is the science of food and its relationship to health [2,3] and Malnutrition is the cellular imbalance between the supply of the nutrients and the energy and the body's demand for them to fortify growth, maintenance, and particular functions [4].

Malnutrition is ubiquitous including rural, tribal, and urban slum areas. The main source for dietary deficiency seen in children can be imputed to overpopulation, poverty, large family size, poor maternal health, different cultural practices, destruction of the environment, lack of education, gender inequality, and recondite medical care [5].

The children of India are undernourished due to the above mentioned factors. Growing undernourished children exhibit behavioral changes, including irritability, apathy, minimal social responsiveness, anxiety, attention deficits, impaired growth, poor school performance and decreased intellectual excellency [6].

Oral health conditions, dietary practices, nutritional status and general health status are all inter-linked elements [7]. Nutrition promotes healthy development and maintenance of oral health. Malnutrition adversely affects the oral structures. Studies have shown that early malnutrition affects tooth structure, delay in tooth eruption and results in increased dental caries [8-10]. It has also been found that nutritional deficit which leads to chronic malnutrition not only affects tooth exfoliation but also renders the permanent teeth susceptible to caries later in life [10]. The presence of enamel hypoplasia may be a predisposing factor in initiating and progression of dental caries and a predictor of high caries susceptibility in these children [11]. In developing countries, studies have documented a significant association between Early Childhood Caries and malnutrition; a bidirectional relationship is postulated, where undernutrition predisposes a child to caries and caries predispose a child to undernutrition [12-14].

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