

Assessing the Double Burden of Malnutrition in Moroccan Women: A Focus on Iron Deficiency and Weight Disorders

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Abstract : Introduction: The double burden of malnutrition (DBM), defined by the concurrent occurrence of undernutrition and overnutrition, represents a critical public health issue, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. In Morocco, 61.3% of women of reproductive age (WRA) are classified as overweight or obese, with 30.4% meeting the criteria for obesity. Furthermore, 34.4% of WRA are affected by anaemia, and 49.7% present with iron deficiency anaemia. Objective: The objective of this study is to assess the individual-level prevalence of the double burden of malnutrition (DBM) among Moroccan WRA, focusing on the simultaneous presence of iron deficiency anaemia and overweight/obesity. Methods: A national cross-sectional survey was carried out on a representative sample of 2090 Moroccan WRA. The data collected encompassed blood samples, anthropometric measurements and socio-economic factors. Haemoglobin levels were assessed using a Hemocue device, while ferritin and CRP levels were determined through immunoturbidimetric analysis. Results: The prevalence of overweight/obesity among WRA in Morocco was 60.2%, iron deficiency affected 30.6%, anaemia was found in 34.4%, and 50.0% had iron deficiency anaemia. The coexistence of overweight/obesity with anaemia was observed in 19.2% and with iron deficiency in 16.3%. Among overweight/obese women, 32.5% were anaemic, 28.4% had iron deficiency, and 47.6% had iron deficiency anaemia. The prevalence of DBM was higher in urban areas compared to rural settings. Conclusion: The DBM among women of WRA showed an emergent reality of the interconnection and the coexistence at individual level of the undernutrition and the overnutrition. Therefore, effective and dual actions that could simultaneously address the double dimension of the DBM have to be implemented for the policy solutions to be successful.

Keywords : the double burden of malnutrition, iron deficiency anemia, overweight, obesity

Conference Title : ICFSN 2024 : International Conference on Food Science and Nutrition

Conference Location : Nicosia, Cyprus

Conference Dates : November 04-05, 2024