

Joint statement, September 2022

72nd Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe

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*Progress report on the Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases
2016-2025*

EFAD and the undersigned organisations, call upon WHO not to leave Nutritional Care behind.

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) are the main cause of ill health in the WHO European Region. The progress report shows that more efforts should be made to reduce this burden. COVID pandemic did not contribute positively, and it is likely that the pandemic will result in a heightened NCD burden in the coming years. Also, the fast rising prevalence of obesity is alarming.

While this NCD progression shows the double burden of obesity and malnutrition the integration of nutritional care is not recognized in recommended actions. Optimal nutritional care is an important contribution to reach the goals as evidence shows.

- The ESPEN-WHO article 'COVID-19: Lessons on malnutrition, nutritional care and public health'(1) addresses the importance of nutrition in prevention, treatment and post-infection care of COVID-19.
- The outcomes of the Thematic Network 'Integrated Nutrition Cancer Care' (2) shows integrated nutritional care is essential across the cancer care continuum, from prevention of cancer in the first place, right through to end of life care. Nutrition interventions improve clinical and socioeconomic outcomes as well as health related quality of life.
- Food and nutrition insecurity is associated with a wide range of chronic conditions, including coronary heart disease, hepatitis, stroke, cancer, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and experiencing multiple chronic diseases(3). In addition, food and nutrition insecurity has been linked to depression(4) and to unacceptably high social and economic costs due to lost productivity and health care costs. The Center for Strategic and International Studies reports that malnutrition costs \$3.5 trillion every year(5).
- Optimal nutritional care prevents diseases, lowers disease risk, reduces hospital stay and improves health outcomes from children to older adults (6).
- Nutritional care is a smart investment for Europe. Economic analyses across various patient populations shows a net return to society even up to €14-€63 for every €1 spent on dietary counseling(6).

Noting:

- The right to nutritional care cannot be separated from the right to health and the right to food, elaborated in The International Declaration on the Human Right to Nutritional Care "Vienna Declaration"(7, 8). This right to nutritional care states that all people should have access to screening, diagnosis, nutritional assessment, with optimal and timely food and evidence-based medical nutrition therapy in order to

reduce the high rates of hospital malnutrition and the associated morbidity and mortality.

- Food (nutrition) literacy is closely linked with health literacy(9) as is digital health.
- Behavioral and cultural insights are inextricably linked with nutrition. Food literacy therefore must align with culinary traditions and personal preferences.
- People centered care is not complete without nutrition and personal nutritional counseling.

Considering the above we call upon WHO and its member states and stakeholders to embed *Nutritional Care* into the prevention and control of NCDs:

- Enhance awareness on the importance of nutritional care as integrated part of policies and interventions taken to address NCDs.
- Integrate nutritional care into public health policy based on human rights, equity, and economic values.
- Consider nutritional care as part of the holistic approach for people, which aims to reduce risk, treat NCDs and improve clinical outcomes.
- Consider nutritional care throughout the life span, including childbearing women and children, older adults and persons with (high risk of) NCDs as the target population.
- Reinforce health systems with clinical nutrition in all health care settings including primary care.
- Involve nutrition and dietetic health professionals in the collaboration, both within and outside the health care system, to achieve effective and sustainable changes in the food landscape.

Every European citizen should have access to nutritional care.

Co-signatories:

European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN)

European Patients' Forum (EPF)

European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)

International Federation on Aging (IFA)

International Association for Hospice & Palliative Care (IAHPC)

International Federation of Medical Students Associations (IFMSA)

European Diabetes Forum

European Stroke Organisation (ESO)

World Family Doctors (WONCA)

World Obesity Forum (WOF)



European
Diabetes Forum

Member
Organisations

EASD

EFSD

FEND

JDRF

International
Diabetes Federation

Société
Fédérale
diabète

PCDE

ISPAD

Supporting
Collaborators

efpia

MedTech Europe



IFMSA
International Federation of
Medical Students' Associations



EUROPEAN STROKE
ORGANISATION



Wonca
World family doctors. Caring for people.
EUROPE

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