



Nutrition Education and Community Health

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Abstract:

This article is mainly focused nutrition education and Community Health. Nutrition is imperative to good health at all stages of human life. Good health is mostly depending on good nutrition, and food is the key source for health and nutrition. Health education is essential if people are to learn how to live a healthy life and avoid diseases. It helps people care about their own health and take part in organizing health services and disease control programmes.

Keywords: Nutrition Education, Community Health, Health education

Introduction:

Nutrition education is a set of learning experiences designed to assist in healthy eating choices and other nutrition-related behavior. It includes any combination of educational strategies, accompanied by environmental supports, designed to facilitate voluntary adoption of food choices and other food and nutrition-related behaviors conducive to health and well-being. Nutrition education is delivered through multiple venues and involves activities at the individual, community, and policy levels. Nutrition

Education also critically looks at issues such as food security, food literacy, and food sustainability.

Nutrition is imperative to good health at all stages of human life. Nutrition and health are synergistic to each other. Adequate nutrition is one of the key factors to attain full potential as an adult and it depends to a great extent on the quality and quantity of the food eaten. The nutritional status of individuals is an indicator of community health. Though the nutrient demands are high during pregnancy, lactation, childhood, adulthood, and old age, it reaches the peak in adolescence in male and female.

The medical services have traditionally been organized around curative medicine, like that carried out by dispensaries, outpatient departments, and hospitals. These services offer help to sick people who come and ask for it, but they do very little for those who do not come and do not ask. For those people who come, curative medicine can cure some diseases, reduce some suffering, and prevent some deaths, but it can do very little to alter the number of new cases of an illness which occur in the community. For instance, curing children of kwashiorkor or gastroenteritis will have little effect on the number of new cases in the future. To control the number of new cases, we have to start before the people become sick.

Nutritional Education

Nutrition is a scientific study of food and its relation to health. The origin of the word 'nutrition' is linked to the Latin words 'nutritionem and nutrire,' meaning 'a nourishing' or 'to nourish, suckle.' It means it is the act or process of nourishing or of being nourished. In this process, persons consume food or nourishing liquids, digest and absorb them and use them for their growth and health.

Everyone have to proper amount nutrition to being healthy. When our body receives all the nutrients in appropriate amounts so as to meet the needs of the body, then

we are in the state of good nutrition and have an optimum or normal nutritional status. The term ‘optimum nutrition’ can be defined as ‘eating the right amounts of nutrients on a proper schedule to achieve the best performance and the longest possible lifetime in good health’.

Optimum nutrition remains an indefinable goal because the needs of the human body change frequently according to its physical activities, and gender-wise and age-wise requirements of nutrition also vary. Apart from that, proper and adequate nutrition and health awareness are very important to tackle the problem of ill health.

Health education is essential if people are to learn how to live a healthy life and avoid diseases. It helps people care about their own health and take part in organizing health services and disease control programmes. Health education can help people realize that health and health services are a basic human right for everyone, and it can help them understand the importance of health services for development.

In primary prevention health education enables people to value their health, and to know about diseases and how to make the best use of the organized health services. It can motivate them to practice hygienic personal habits and healthy behaviour for themselves like using safe water, mosquito nets, and child spacing. It can encourage people to care for their own environment, such as water supplies and excreta disposal. Health education can also help medical workers understand what the people want and by working together they can develop a healthier life.

In secondary prevention health education can help people understand and value different screening procedures, such as those involved in MCH services. It can help people recognize the symptoms and signs of important diseases like leprosy and tuberculosis earlier, and it can help them co-operate in reporting diseases in surveillance programmes for such diseases as measles, rabies, and malaria.

Health education in tertiary prevention can help people understand diseases better and co-operate with the medical services so that they carry out their treatment properly for example, continue with treatment for tuberculosis until cured. While people are attending for treatment, health education can also teach new knowledge about how to prevent diseases such as malaria and gastroenteritis.

Health education is not a one-way process; it is not just medical staff telling people what to do. People can help us understand their situation, their needs and their demands, their culture and environment, and through this better understanding we can help them to a healthier life.

Health is very closely related with nutritional status, there is a direct causal link between them. Nutrition is usually taken as a significant indicator of human health. Human beings acquire nutrition through food consumption, and a safe food supply is essential for proper nutrition, basic health and well being. Thus food and nutrition are now regarded as being fundamental importance in public health in both developed and developing countries. Nutritional issues are often seen in the industrialised and developed societies as those relating to inadequate food or because of deficiency diseases that were dominated in the early part of the twentieth century, while persisting in the poor or developing countries. Now, however, food and nutrition along with lifestyle changes are recognised as the principal environmental components affecting a wide range of diseases of public health importance throughout the world.

Community Health:

Community health is the part of medicine which is concerned with the health of the whole population and the prevention of diseases from which it suffers. It does this by making a community diagnosis of which diseases are important and which can be prevented, and then suitable control programmes are organized. The problem of how to do this arises when there is only a limited amount of money to be spent on the medical

services. The limited amount of money makes it necessary to work out which among the important and preventable diseases are the priorities, and then to decide on the most effective control programmes that can be afforded.

Health status is the level of health of individual, group or community, also one of the indicators of measuring quality of life. Health status is a comprehensive concept that is determined by more than the presence or absence of any disease. It is often summarised by life expectancy or self-assessed health status, and more broadly includes measures of functioning, physical illness, and mental wellbeing. Medically, health status can be defined as the range of manifestation of disease in a given patient including symptoms, functional limitations, and quality of life, in which quality of life is the discrepancy between actual and desired function. Elevating the health status of the people is the great necessity of time, from the point of view of individuals and nation also, healthy people build healthy nation. Unhealthy people cannot properly utilize the resources, facilities and opportunities made available to them, and failed to be a part of nation's development. The promotion of the health status of the people, therefore, is highly essential for raising their quality of life. Eventually, health care remains one of the most important human endeavors to improve quality of life. Continuous efforts are being made to improve the conditions of the people, to bring change in their life style by all Government of the developing countries. Improvement of national standard of health has, therefore, been accorded high priority in social welfare programmes, in our country. Health status of individuals may be measured by a general practitioner, who carry outs an examination and rates the individual along any of various dimensions, including presence or absence of severe illness, risk factors for unripe death, harshness of disease and overall health. While health status of entire population is determined by arranging data collected on individuals. The life expectancy, the prevalence of preventable diseases or deaths and availability of health services are the indicators of health status of whole population.

Relationship between Nutrition and Health

Good health is mostly depending on good nutrition, and food is the key source for health and nutrition. People who eat nutritious foods enjoy sound health, longer and disease less life. Besides, a well-balanced diet that offers reliable nutrition is often acclaimed for encouraging long life, minimizing the incidence of disease, and helping ailing people recover. In contrast, insufficient nutrition and low quality foods can generally reduce life expectancy and ruled a person to a range of diseases and deformities. The public health approach, therefore, to the prevention of nutrition and diet-related diseases requires the adoption of health oriented nutrition and food policies for the whole population. It means that, nutrition is very vital to human body as water is to plants. It feeds and supports our body, hence we are alive. Everybody has sure nutritional requirements that must be adequately met on a regular basis in order to have that body operate well and repair itself when injured or overused. Overall, nutrition and health are very closely related to each other. As per the above discussion, it is clear that every human being needs certain amount of nutrition for healthy survival of its life. As per the consumption of nutrition through foods, individual can be broadly categorized into four nutritional statuses *i.e.* optimum nutrition, under nutrition, over nutrition and malnutrition. It is important to realize that many other lifestyles and environmental factors, in addition to nutrition, influence health and well-being, but nutrition is major modifiable and powerful factor in promoting health, preventing and treating diseases and improving quality of life. It means optimum nutrition is fundamental to sound health and well being as well as prevention of diseases and disability.

Conclusion

Good nutrition is fundamental for good health. Healthy diet is always benefited and it can impacted on rural people's nutrition and health status, accordingly enhance the productivity of individuals and nation. It is necessary, therefore, to provide food security to the people and maintain healthy diet.

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