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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

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