

Landmark report sets priorities to address malnutrition

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With nearly two billion people suffering from malnutrition across the planet, scientists and public health experts came together under an unprecedented alliance spearheaded by The Sackler Institute for Nutrition Science at the New York Academy of Sciences to create A Global Research Agenda for Nutrition Science to identify the most critical knowledge gaps in the field of nutrition. The report supports the ongoing effort to accelerate global commitment, cooperative work, and funding to uncover and implement scientific and evidence-based solutions to malnutrition.

This Agenda offers a portrayal of the current state of knowledge in the field of nutrition, and critical gaps in evidence that need to be urgently filled in order to maximize resources and develop solutions for the various aspects of the global problem of malnutrition.

Specifically, this Agenda calls for concerted and coordinated research on:

- environmental and societal trends affecting food and nutrition;
- unresolved issues of nutrition in the lifecycle; and
- delivery of intervention and operational gaps.

"Nutrition is integral to some of the most severe global challenges of our time. The shrewd application of science to understanding the complexities of [human nutrition](#) helps establish the maps that guide us as we move forward," says Dr. David Nabarro, Special Representative of

the UN Secretary General for Food Security and Nutrition.

"This Agenda, being developed by The Sackler Institute and WHO, in conjunction with many other scientists and practitioners worldwide, should serve as a basis for the application of science to develop solutions for the critical issues in nutrition and development. It is bound to be an ever-growing Agenda—and ever-changing Agenda—because that is how science is," Nabarro adds.

Malnutrition, which includes both under- and over-nutrition, affects more than a quarter of the world's population. Poor nutrition causes a range of serious and costly health problems, from impaired cognitive and physical development to illness, disease, and death. The implications extend far beyond health outcomes, affecting workforce capacity, political stability, and economic progress.

By collaboratively activating the Agenda, stakeholders—including researchers, funders, implementation specialists, and policy makers—have the potential to change the global nutrition landscape; ultimately tipping the scales from malnutrition to optimal nutrition. To this end, [nutrition science](#) researchers will convene at The Sackler Institute for Nutrition Science at the New York Academy of Sciences on September 26th to start activation of the global research agenda through a full day of specialized working groups.

"This is a critical time for nutrition," says Dr. Mandana Arabi, founding executive director of The Sackler Institute. "With billions of dollars in new funding recently committed during the pre-G8 'Nutrition for Growth' event, there is a strong need for high-level, coordinated, and collaborative research to provide the evidence base for country-level program implementation. By identifying and filling research gaps and then applying this knowledge to create evidence-based interventions, the global [nutrition](#) science community can ensure that available funds are

used efficiently and effectively, thereby achieving real and lasting impact."

More information: For more information on the global research agenda and to read the full report, visit www.nutritionresearchagenda.org

Provided by New York Academy of Sciences

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