

FOOD CHOICE DILEMMA: A REVIEW OF ANIMAL FOOD SOURCES RISKS, PLANT BASED DIET AND POLICY SOLUTION



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Key Note Address Abstract:

In the 21st century, low and middle-income countries have experienced a dietary transition with a shift from traditional diet to western type of diet. The latter is characterized by saturated fats, high sodium, high sugar, meat and dairy products. Further to this, high level of cases with metabolic syndromes and early mortality has been experienced. Unbalanced dietary pattern has been ranked as number one risk to mortality and Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) lost which is approximated to 11 million deaths and 255 million "DALYs" loss respectively and are associated with cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and Cancer. In addition, increased consumption of animal food and products, the risk of Zoonoses among human posing serious challenges of lethal food-borne diseases. This effect is not only a threat to human health but also negative environmental impact associated with climate changes leading to biodiversity losses. Climatic disruptions through the reduction of food systems which is associated with large animal product emitting heavy carbon footprints are expected to reduce agricultural productivity, micronutrients food content, and food availability which again has impacted on high food prices and pushing humanity to unhealthy dietary patterns. In this Keynote address the focus shall be on animal food sources, plant-based diets and associated risks. The overall goal is to provide a policy focus on sustainable dietary guidelines that respond to human health and environment sustainability towards sustainable development goals. The aim is to reach a scientific equilibrium in the changing dietary patterns and food choices shifts as part of one-health agenda.

Key Messages:

1. In the context of animal, food and environment, planetary and human health issues are major areas of Public Health concern in the one health agenda and should be given focus in the area of food choice preference.
2. A shift from consumption of animals-based foods to plant-based diet need be sensitive to health risks to humanity. This can be guided by harmonized Diet Index that consider planetary and human health at the center of scientific research.
3. Zoonoses and other risk associated with cardiovascular diseases are the key driving factors of the shift towards planetary based diet.
4. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive Diet Index that will respond to planetary and human health needs for the local situation with a target to local foods that responds to the diet diversity in the low and low middle income countries. The development of this index should include all key actors in health, environment and policy matter.

Biography

Dr. Okeyo has over 14 years of experience in public health and nutrition research, evidenced by over 45 peer-reviewed publications with records from 2007 to date. He is currently the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics. He has assumed various positions in various government and regional appointments. His recent appointment was in the membership of the Secretariat for "THE INTER-SECTORAL COMMITTEE ON HEALTH WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING REFORMS" spearheaded by Ministry of Health, within Health Act 2017, July 2022, membership of the Infant and Young Child Committee within the "Breast Milk Substitutes (Regulation and Control), Act, 2012, June July 2022 and Acting Chief of Party to spearhead the implementation of Kenya Nutritionists and Dieticians Institute Resource Mobilization Hub in the name "KNDI ATRI Programmes", February 2022. He serves as Chief Executive Officer for the Kenya Nutritionists and Dieticians Institute (KNDI), which regulates the training, practices and research among nutritionists and dieticians' professionals. He has previously worked as head of the Department for nutrition and Health at Maseno University, leading programming, monitoring and evaluation consultancies. He has had previous experience with East, Central Southern Africa-Health Community programmes as a consultant for the dissemination of model nutrition curricula for Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, where he had an opportunity to interact with NCDs, Food Security and Nutrition programmes. His dream is to facilitate a work environment characterized by good programming and research that informs a wider audience through harmonized high-quality sharable publications on nutrition issues at community, national, and regional levels and human capital management.