nut-8.3. Describe the Nutrient Requirements, Recommendations, or Dietary Guidelines and the Evaluation Approach Used to Compare Intake with the Dietary Reference Values, If Applicable

Example 1. “Estimates of the prevalence of inadequate intakes of essential nutrients from food sources alone were calculated by using the Estimated Average Requirement (EAR) cut-point method. The EARs were primarily derived from the United Kingdom’s Dietary Reference Values. In the case of nutrients for which the EAR was not set (vitamin E, selenium, and iodine), values developed by the Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine were used as surrogate EARs. Alternative values were used in addition to the EARs for nutrients for which considerable differences exist in dietary recommendations between countries—that is, folate and calcium—or for which vegetarian-specific recommendations exist—that is, iron and zinc” .

Explanation. The recommended approach when reporting the intake adequacy of micronutrients is to evaluate observed intakes against the average requirements (e.g., EAR or Average Requirement) (65). The proportion of the population with intakes below the EAR, or Average Requirement, is the proportion in the study population at risk of inadequate intakes. Only reporting the mean intake in relation to the Recommended Intake or RDA is not sufficient, because this does not enable the reader to judge the adequacy of the diet (65). It is helpful to describe any alternative values used. When the EAR is not available for a specific group and instead calculated (e.g., for children), it is helpful to describe any formulas used.