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**Systematic review of the current guidelines on adolescent nutrition: challenges and implications**

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**Objectives/aim**

The adolescent population forms the future generation of any country upon which the economic and social wellbeing of the country depends. To provide a good foundation for healthy adolescent development, healthy diet along with physical activity and adequate nutrients are required. Therefore addressing the nutrition needs of adolescents could be an important step towards breaking the vicious cycle of intergenerational malnutrition, chronic diseases and poverty. These problems could be easily addressed upon timely recognition and interventions delivered to them.

The aim of this exercise is to review the existing guidelines on various aspects of nutrition interventions for adolescents and young women.

**Methods**

The paper reviewed all the major existing guidelines on adolescent nutrition.

**Main findings**

We were able to find eighteen guideline bodies that covered some form of nutritional advice in their guidelines that targeted adolescents. Although the guidelines that do focus specifically on this age group are limited in their scope, we also extrapolated recommendations from guidelines focusing on adults, women of reproductive age and pregnant women that were based on evidence that included populations of adolescent girls. We were able to extract and synthesize specific directives for nutrition in adolescents, macro and micronutrient supplementation, exercise, obesity and nutrition during preconception, during pregnancy and post conception period.

There is a general lack of strong, comprehensive guidelines that target adolescents in general and pregnant adolescents. This age group is currently facing high rates of morbidity and mortality and has priority needs that need urgent attention by global and national bodies. We would recommend that health care professionals, researchers and policy makers come together and formulate guidelines on nutrition and healthy behaviors in adolescence that are based on strong evidence from randomized controlled trials on adolescents and best practices wherever possible, and updated as new evidence becomes available.