

Nutritional status & phenotyping

October 28 2025

Serge Rezzi, PhD
CEO Swiss Nutrition and Health foundation
serge.rezzi@nutritionhealthfoundation.ch
<https://nutritionhealthfoundation.ch/>

Tel. +41 21 65326 50 – Fax +41 21 653 26 52
Route de la Corniche 3B
CH-1066 EPALINGES



The biochemical and physiological process by which an organism uses food to support its life. It includes ingestion, absorption, assimilation, biosynthesis, catabolism and excretion of nutrients and related molecules



Nutritional status is the balance between the intake of nutrients by an organism and the expenditure of these in the processes of growth, reproduction, and health maintenance

Nutrients and micronutrients

Water

MACRONUTRIENTS

(required in relatively high amounts)

PROTEINS

Amino acids

CARBOHYDRATES

Complex sugars
(starch, fibers)

Simple sugars (fructose /
saccharose)

LIPIDS

Triglycerides and
insaturated fatty acids

Triglycerides and saturated
fatty acids

Other lipids (phospholipids,
cholesterol...)

MICRONUTRIENTS

(required in relatively low amounts)

VITAMINS

Hydrosoluble
C, B1, B2, B3, B6..

Liposoluble
A, D, E, K

MINERALS / TE










Iron (Fe), Calcium (Ca),
Potassium (K), Zinc
(Zn)...

PHYTOCHEMICALS

Lutein, zeaxanthin,
lyopene, ployphenols...

Measurement of nutritional status needs a multi-disciplinary approach

Nutritional status is multifactorial

-  Food intake
-  Socio-economics status
-  Genetics
-  Microbiome
-  Metabolism
-  Health status
-  Physiological status
-  Environment
-  Lifestyle

Dietary assessment

FFQ
24H recall

Clinical assessment

Anthropometry
Symptomology

Laboratory tests

Current gaps

Accuracy (i.e. poorly quantitative)
Validation in specific population
Electronic version not always available

Accuracy (i.e. poorly quantitative)
Specificity
Based on short term symptomology

Accuracy (i.e. poorly quantitative)
Single nutrient-based
Standardization
Reliable biomarkers
Interpreted vs. population reference values
Knowledge on long term effects

Self-Reported Dietary Assessment methods

		24-Hour Recall	Food Record	Food Frequency Questionnaire	Screeners or History
Scope of interest	Total diet	X	X	X	
	One or a few components			X	X
Time frame of interest	Short term	X	X		
	Long term			X	X
Can be used to query diet in distant past	Yes			X	X
	No	X	X		
Allows cross-cultural comparisons	Yes	X	X		
	No			X	X
Main type of measurement error	Random	X	X		
	Systematic			X	X
Potential for reactivity	High		X		
	Low	X		X	X
Time required to complete	<15 minutes				X
	>20 minutes	X	X	X	
Memory requirements	Specific	X			
	Generic			X	X
	None		X		
Cognitive difficulty	High			X	X
	Low	X	X		
Study Design	Cross-sectional	X	X	X	X
	Retrospective			X	X
	Prospective	X	X	X	X
	Intervention	X		X	X



Aliments et nutrition	Objets usuels	Animaux	Importation et exportation	L'OSAV
-----------------------	---------------	---------	----------------------------	--------

Aliments et nutriments

Aliments sélectionnés

Besoins en nutriments

Base de données des valeurs nutritives

Allergies et intolérances

Besoins en nutriments



L'OSAV publie des recommandations sur les besoins journaliers en protéines, en glucides et en graisses, ainsi que sur les nutriments nécessaires aux personnes ayant des besoins nutritionnels particuliers.



Actuel

Les poissons des lacs, une bonne source de vitamine D

La carence en vitamine D est très répandue en Suisse comme au niveau mondial. Même si chez l'homme les besoins sont en majorité couverts par la synthèse endogène de vitamine D au niveau de la peau, les apports alimentaires sont aussi importants au bon fonctionnement de l'organisme.

A balanced diet to diversify and optimize nutrient intakes

Swiss food pyramid



Source: SSN - Food Pyramid

Optimal dishes



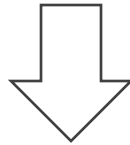
Balanced meal

Food nutrient contents



Swiss food composition database

<https://valeursnutritives.ch>



Food/nutrients intakes

Nutrients needs





SWISS NUTRITION & HEALTH FOUNDATION

Dietary supplements

Definition

Food supplements are foodstuffs intended to supplement the normal diet. They constitute a concentrated source of vitamins, minerals or other substances having a nutritional or physiological effect, alone or in combination, marketed in the form of doses.

Ordinance of the Federal Department of Home Affairs on food supplements, December 16th 2016

Article 3

The labeling must mention the content of vitamins, minerals and other substances at the time of delivery to the consumer. The values indicated must be based on the average values referred to in art. 26, al. 4, OIDA1

Ordinance of the Federal Department of Home Affairs about the information on foodstuffs (OIDA1), article 26

*The energy value and nutrient content of the food **must be indicated on the date of delivery to consumers.***

*For mandatory indications, can use mean values from: **analysis from the manufacturer**, calculation made from the values relating to the used ingredients, calculation made from generally established and recognized data.*

Article 4

The labeling, presentation and advertising of food supplements **may not bear any statement asserting or suggesting that a balanced and varied diet is not a sufficient source of nutrients in general.**

Dietary supplements, several facts...

- France, Study NutriNet-Santé (2009)
 - 15 % of men and 28 % of women took dietary supplements (DS) at least 3 days a week
 - 60 % of DS regularly consumed for one year
 - In 55 % of cases, products recommended or prescribed by a medical doctor
- Switzerland, study on CoLaus cohort (around 6000 subjects)
 - 26% consumed a DS (vitamins/minerals: 16,8%)
 - Women consumed more DS than men
 - DS consumption associated with a better health profile

P Marques-Vidal et al. European Journal of Clinical Nutrition (2009) 63, 273–281

US



Original Investigation | Public Health

Analysis of Select Dietary Supplement Products Marketed to Support or Boost the Immune System

Cindy Crawford, BA; Bharathi Avula, PhD; Andrea T. Lindsey, MS; Abraham Walter, MS; Kumar Katragunta, PhD; Ikhlas A. Khan, PhD; Patricia A. Deuster, PhD, MPH

Crawford C et al. JAMA Netw Open. 2022;5(8):e2226040.

- 17 / 30 products with inaccurate labels
- 13 products with labelled ingredients not detected by laboratory analysis
- 9 products had substances detected that were not on the labels
- None of the products had third-party certification seals present on the packaging

CH



Faire un don | Devenir membre | Se connecter | Boutique

SE DÉFENDRE | S'INFORMER | AGIR ENSEMBLE | L'ASSOCIATION

TEST : ALIMENTATION

Les promesses non tenues des compléments alimentaires



Source: <https://www.frc.ch/complement-alimentaire/>

- 10 products (vitamins & minerals, positioned to support immune function) purchased in pharmacies
- Differences in measured and declared values in 50% of products
- One product reported as iron containing product was not found to contain iron
- Large variability of compositions and relatively to RVs

What efficacy and for what goal ?

- In general, lack of high quality scientific studies demonstrating clinical effects
 - Randomized clinical studies, double blind
- Different scenarios leading to DS consumption:
 - Medical prescriptions:
 - Based on credible diagnostic and demonstrated nutritional needs
 - Management of deficiencies, insufficiencies and possible toxicity
 - « Self-medication »
 - Driven by expectations on maintaining health, improvement of physical or cognitive performance, disease prevention or management of disease/therapy side effects

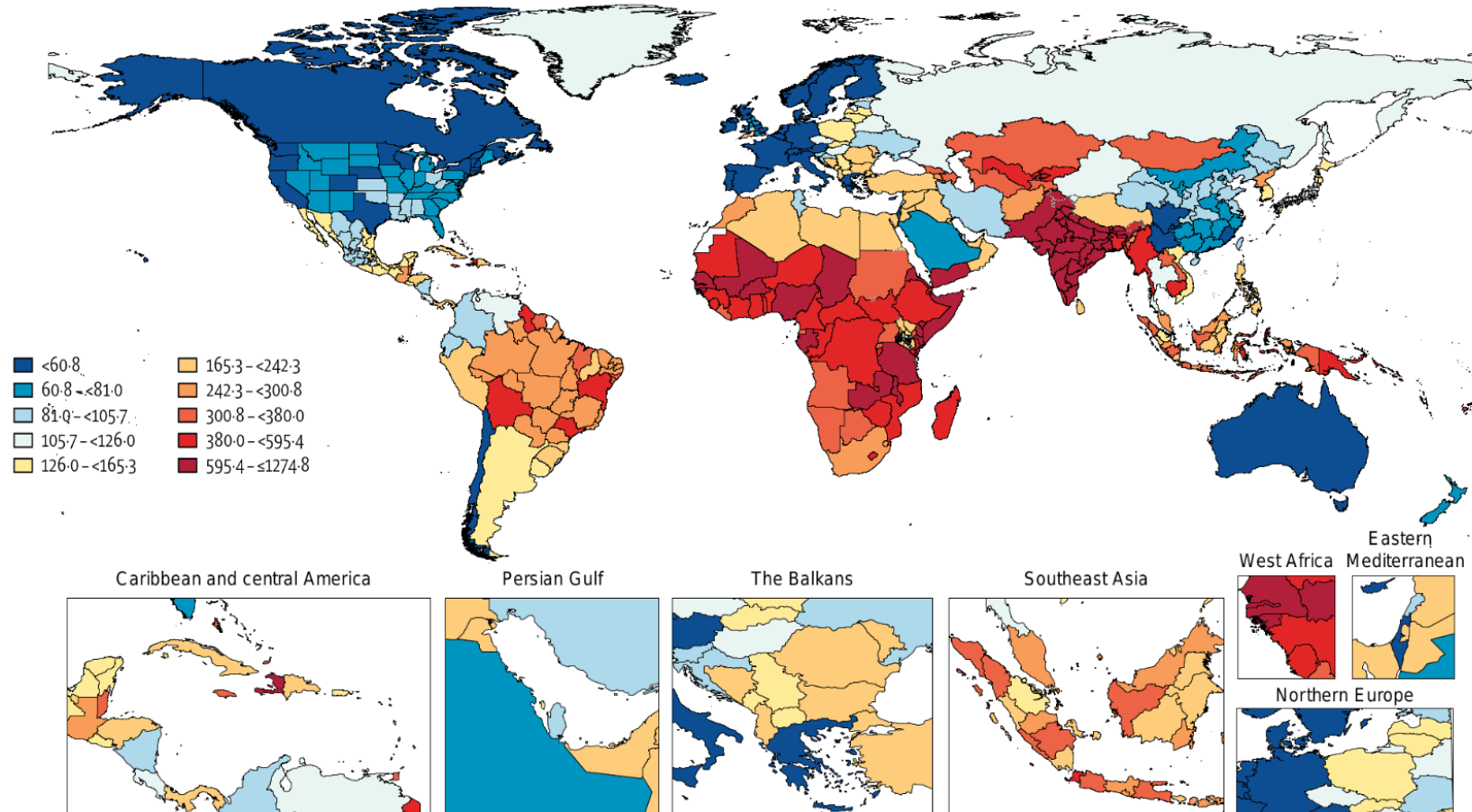
Study SU.VI.MAX (Supplémentation en Vitamines et Minéraux Anti-oXydants)

- Interventional double blind clinical study
- Research team (Prof. Hercberg Serge et al.), 12'000-15'000 subjects
- Intervention: beta-carotene (6mg), vitamine C (120mg), vitamine E (30mg), zinc (20mg), selenium (100mg) / day (period: 8 years) vs. Placebo
- Study of effects on cancer incidence, cardiovascular diseases, death
- Results:
 - No effect on cardiovascular diseases incidence
 - Effect on cancer incidence, in men only
 - Effect on mortality, on men only

Dietary iron deficiency

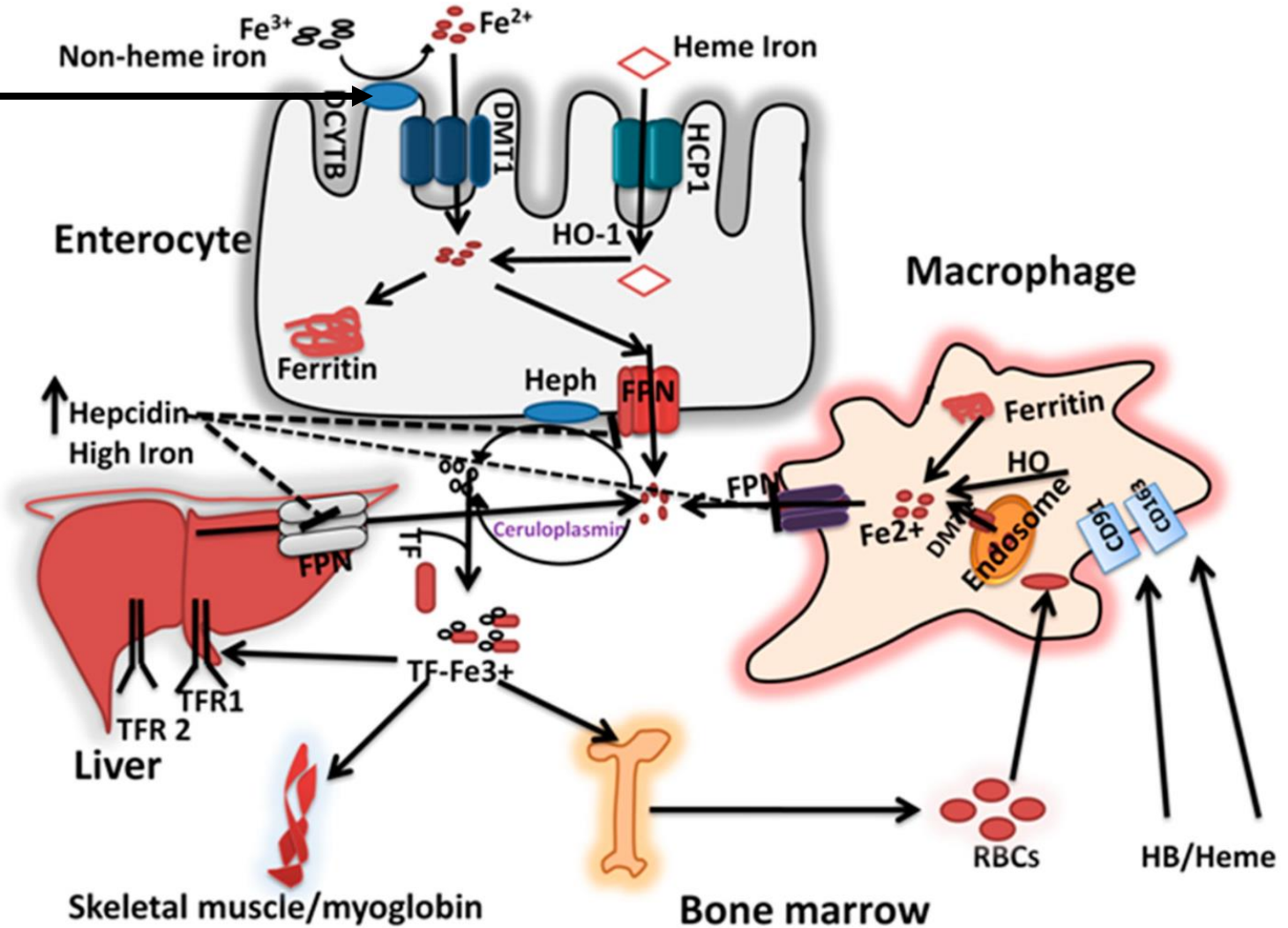
Age-standardised DALY rates (per 100 000) by location, both sexes combined, 2019

Global prevalence of 14.4% (14.1–14.6) and accounted for 28.5 million (19.1–41.1) disability-adjusted life year (DALYs) globally in 2019.



One DALY represents the loss of the equivalent of one year of full health.

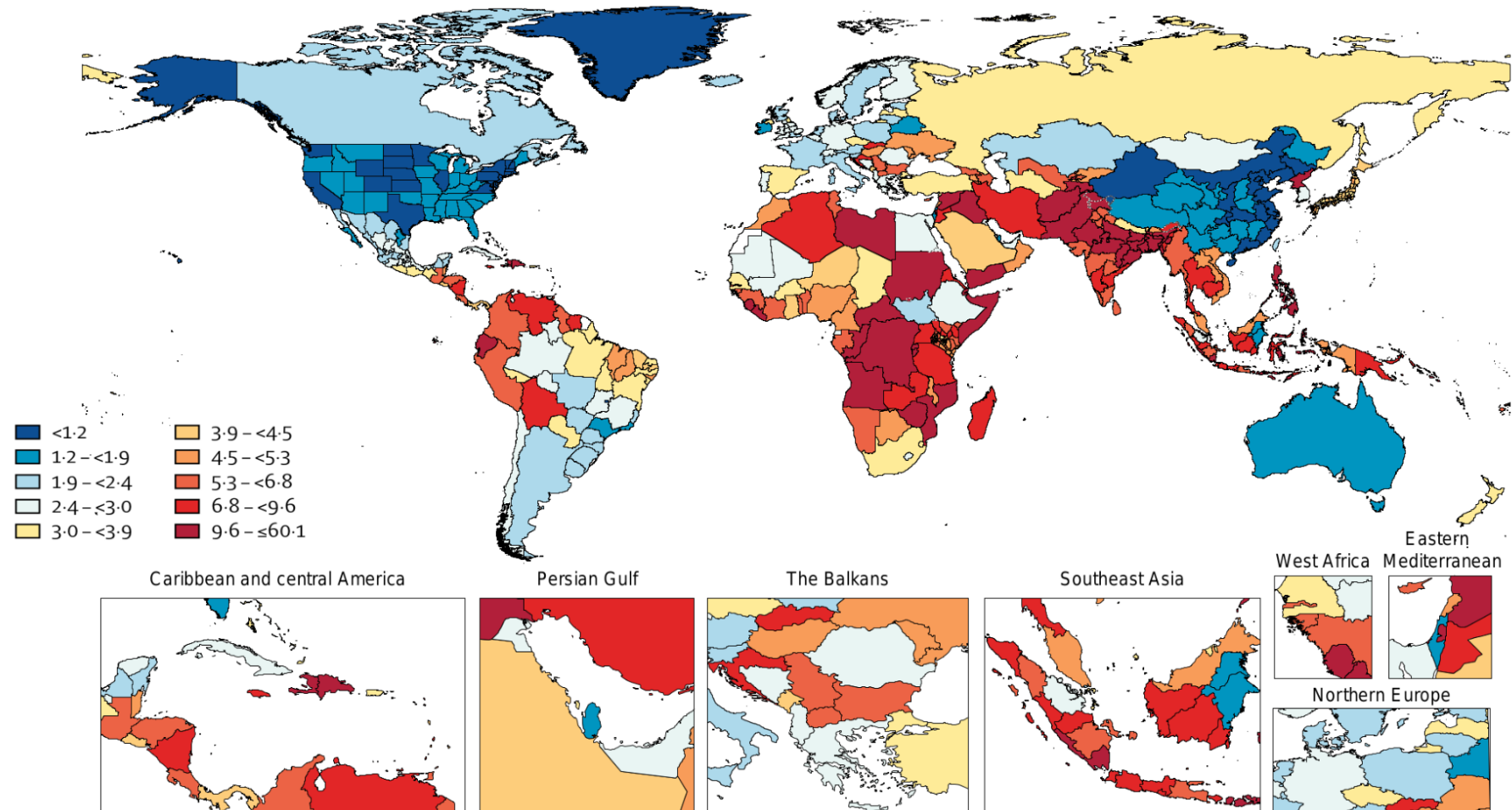
Vitamin C (ascorbate)
 ferrireductase
 Duodenal cytochrome B
 reductase 1 (DCYTB)

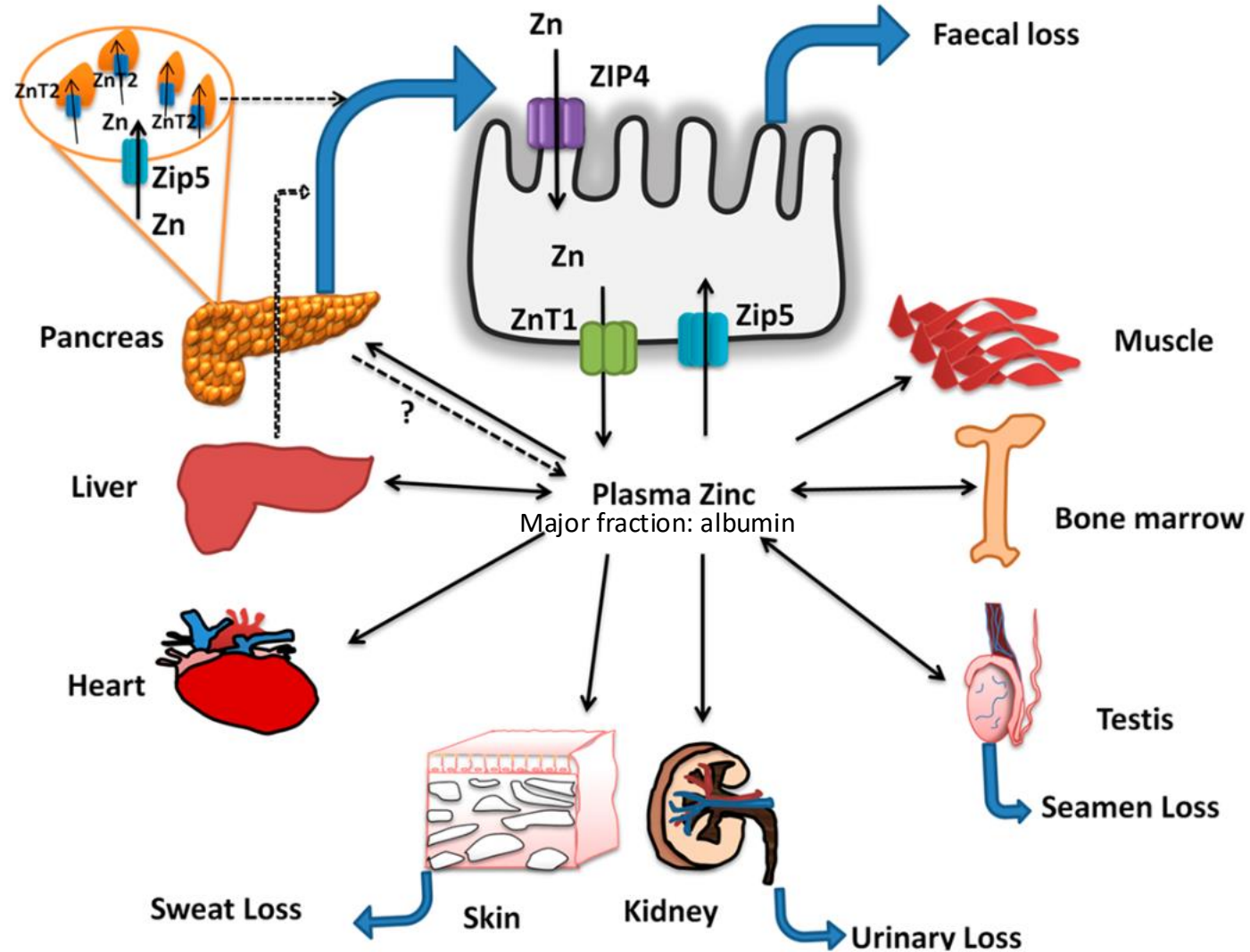


Dietary zinc deficiency

Age-standardised all-cause summary exposure values, SEV, by location, both sexes combined, 2019

Zinc deficiency is defined as zinc consumption (in mg/day) less than 2–3 mg from all dietary sources.

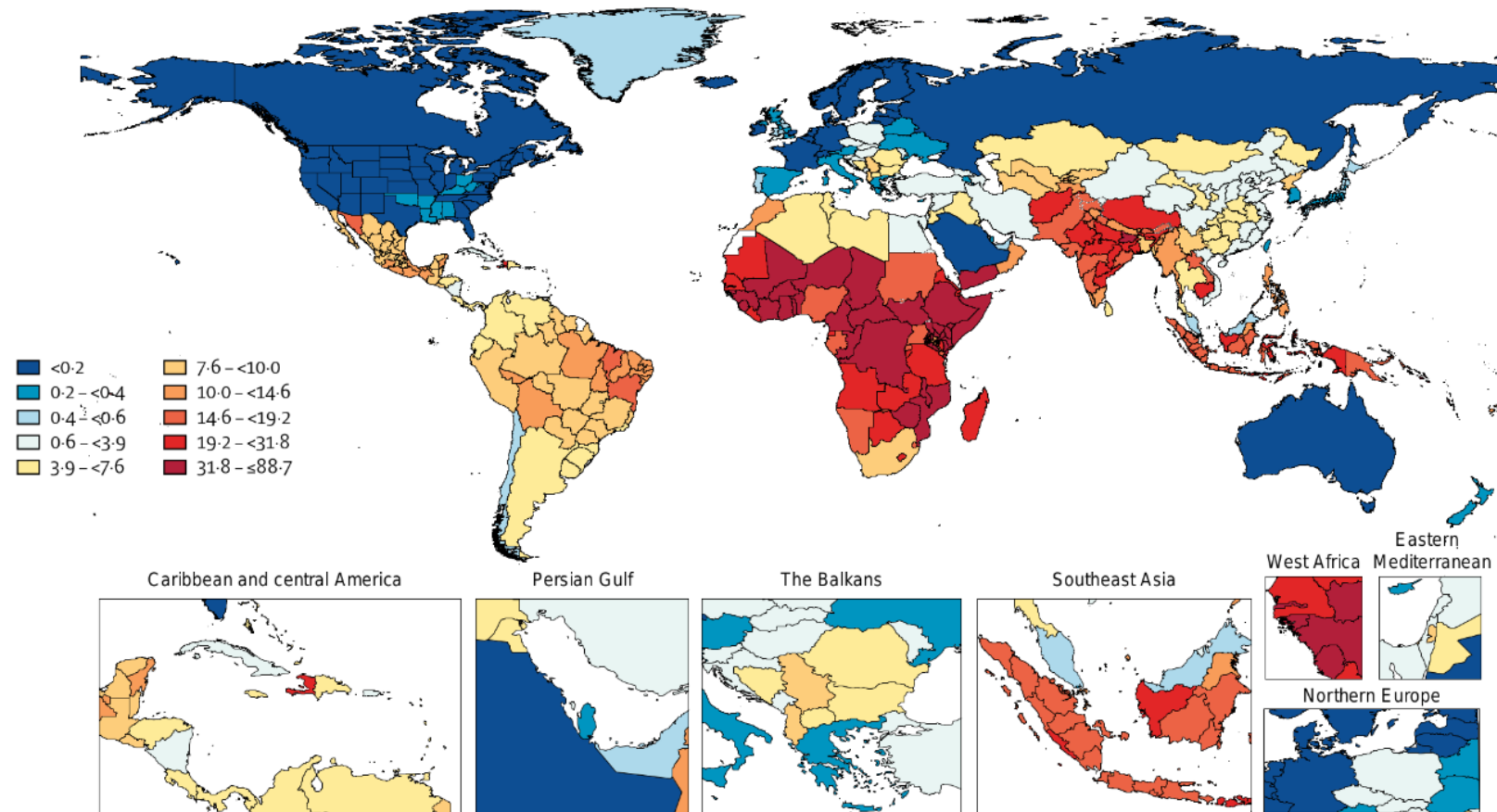




Vitamin A deficiency

Age-standardised DALY rates (per 100 000) by location, both sexes combined, 2019

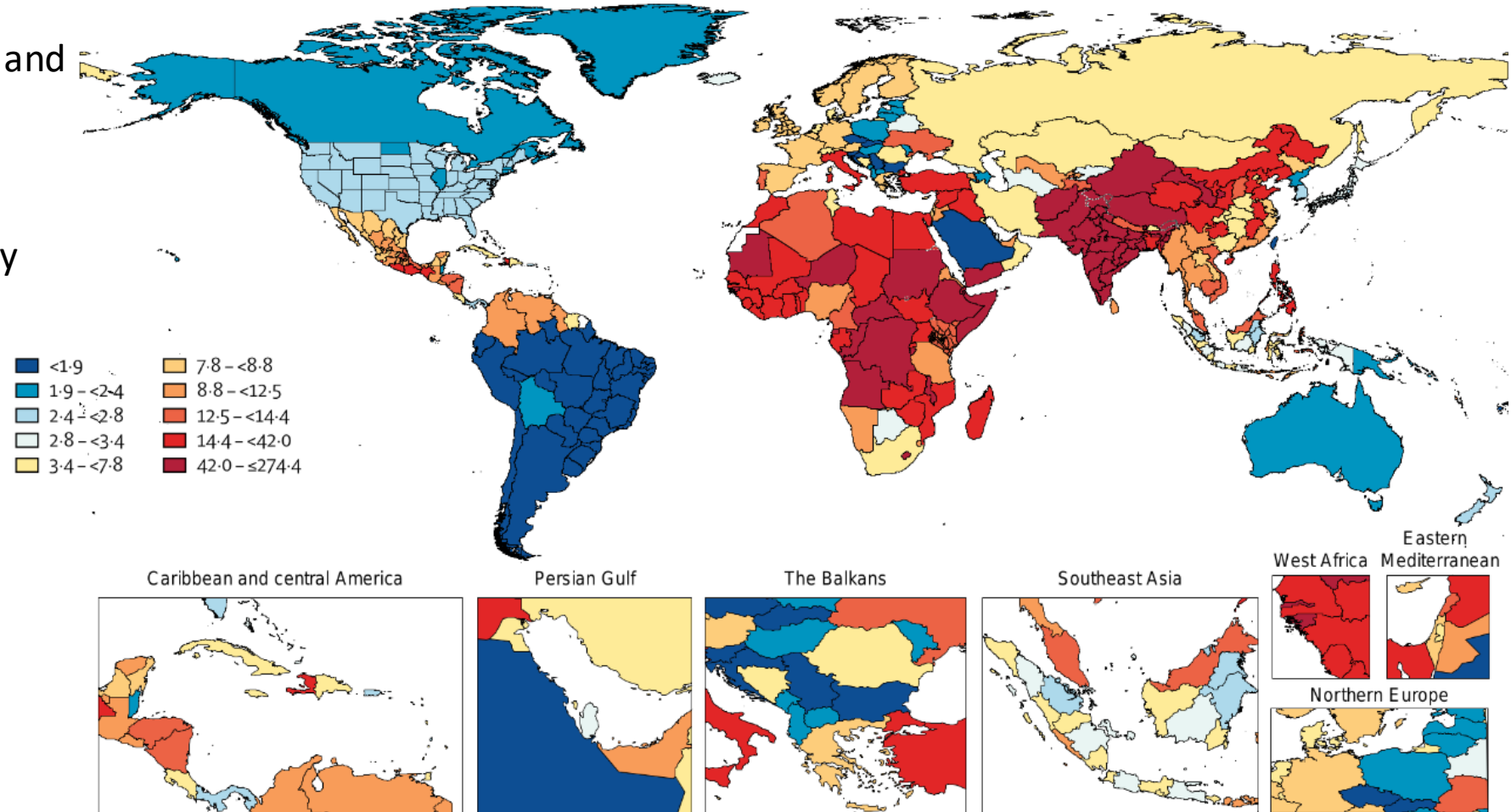
Vitamin A deficiency was responsible for 1.18 million DALYs globally, including 506 000 DALYs in children under the age of 5. Total vitamin A deficiency (defined as serum retinol <0.70 $\mu\text{mol/L}$) and disability from blindness and vision loss due to vitamin A deficiency



In 2019, iodine deficiency had a global prevalence of 2.4% and accounted for 2.44 million DALYs globally.

visible goiter (grade 2) and associated sequelae:

- thyroid dysfunction
- heart failure
- intellectual disability



A useful biomarker of micronutrient status must:

- Correlate with the rate of vitamin intake, at least within the nutritionally significant range, and respond to deprivation of the vitamin
- Relate to a meaningful period of time
- Relate to normal physiologic function
- Be measurable in an accessible specimen
- Be technically feasible, reproducible, and affordable I have an available base of normative data

Liposoluble vitamins

Vitamin	Functional parameters	Tissue levels
A		Serum retinol Total body store using stable isotopes (heavy to implement) <i>Change in serum retinol after oral load</i> <i>Liver retinyl esters</i>
D		Serum total 25-(OH)-vitamin D (sum of D2 and D3 forms) <i>Serum vitamin D3</i> <i>Serum 1,25-(OH)²-D3</i> <i>Serum alkaline phosphatase</i>
E	Erythrocyte hemolysis	Serum tocopherols (often α- and γ-tocopherol) not corrected and corrected to blood lipids (cholesterol and triglycerides) <i>Serum malondialdehyde, Serum 1,4-isoprostanes</i> <i>Breath alkanes</i>
K	Clotting time Prothrombin time Uncarboxylated Gla-proteins (PIVKA-II)	Serum vitamin K

Hydrosoluble vitamins

Vitamin	Functional parameters	Tissue levels	Urinary excretion
C (ascorbic acid)		Serum ascorbic acid Leukocyte ascorbic acid	Ascorbic acid Ascorbic acid after load
B1 (thiamin)	Erythrocyte transketolase stimulation	Blood thiamin Blood pyruvate	Thiamin (thiochrome) Thiamin after load
B2 (riboflavin)	RBC glutathione reductase stimulation	Blood riboflavin	Ribloflavin
B3 (niacin)		RBC nicotinamide (NAD) RBC NAD:NADP ratio Plasma tryptophan	1-methylnicotinamide 1-methyl-6-pyridone-3- carboxamide
B5 (pantothenic acid)	RBC sulfanilamide acetylase	Serum/plasma pantothenic acid RBC pantothenic acid	Pantothenic acid

RBC: red blood cells.

Hydrosoluble vitamins

Vitamin	Functional parameters	Tissue levels	Urinary excretion
B6*	RBC transaminase	Plasma pyridoxal phosphate RBC transaminase stimulation RBC pyridoxal phosphate Plasma pyridoxal	Xanthurenic acid after tryptophan load Quinolinic acid 4-Pyridoxic acid
B7 (biotin)		Blood biotin Serum/plasma biotin	Biotin 3-hydroxyisovalerylcarnitine and acylcarnitines
B9 (folic acid)	Plasma homocysteine	Serum folates RBC folates Leukocyte folates, liver folates	FIGLU after histidine load Urocanic acid after histidine load
B12 (cobalamin)	Plasma homocysteine	Serum vitamin B12 Serum holoTC 2 RBC vitamin B12	FIGLU Methylmalonic acid

*Vitamin B6 refers to six common forms: pyridoxal, pyridoxine (pyridoxol), pyridoxamine, and their phosphorylated forms.

RBC: red blood cells; FIGLU: formiminoglutamic acid; holoTC2: holotranscobalamin 2

Limitations of some biomarkers of vitamin status

Vitamin	Biomarker	Limitations
A	Plasma retinol	Reflects body vitamin A stores only at severely depleted or excessive levels; confounding effects of protein and zinc deficiencies and renal dysfunction
D	Plasma alkaline phosphatase	Affected by other disease states
E	Plasma tocopherol	Affected by blood lipid transport capacity
B1	Plasma thiamin	Low sensitivity to changes in thiamin intake
B2	Plasma riboflavin	Low sensitivity to changes in riboflavin intake
B6	RBC glutamic-pyruvic	Genetic polymorphism transaminase
B9	RBC folates Urinary FIGLU	Also reduced in vitamin B12 deficiency Also increased in vitamin B12 deficiency
B12	Urinary FIGLU	Also increased in folate deficiency

Element	Status biomarker	Remark
Fe	Serum ferritin	Affected by inflammation other biomarker: hepcidin
Se	Plasma selenium Selenoprotein P	
I	Urinary iodine	Other biomarker: serum thyroglobulin
Zn	Serum/plasma Zn	New biomarkers required
Cu	Serum ceruloplasmin Serum Cu	

Overall limitations

Single nutrient-based biomarkers, lack of specificity and sensitivity

Neglect kinetic / nutrient bioavailability aspects

Accessible testing matrix (plasma...) might not relate to intracellular pools

Indicative of depletion/repletion (short term exposure)

Neglect interactions with the gut

Reference ranges based on population studies

Possible ways forward



Novel nutrient pattern signatures or integrative biomarkers (Metabolomics)



Assess individual nutrient bioavailability capabilities (Nutrikinetics)



Assess intracellular nutrient status with highly sensitive techniques (mass spectrometry)



Build scientific evidence on long term health effects



Nutrient pattern signatures or integrative biomarkers



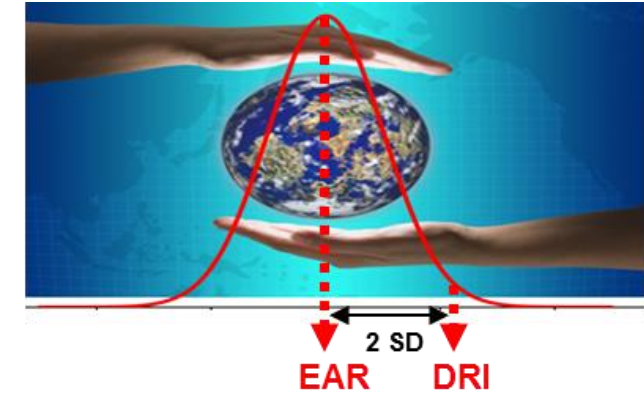
Develop individual-specific targets (precision nutrition)

Meeting individual needs requires individual nutritional phenotyping

- Nutritional reference systems (DRI, RDA, EAR) are population-based and limited to the study of acute nutritional deficiencies (i.e. vitamin C and scurvy)
- Need to capture and understand nutrient biology in its inherent complexity and at the individual scale (i.e. genetic variants and nutrikinetics, nutridynamics, nutrient-nutrient interactions)

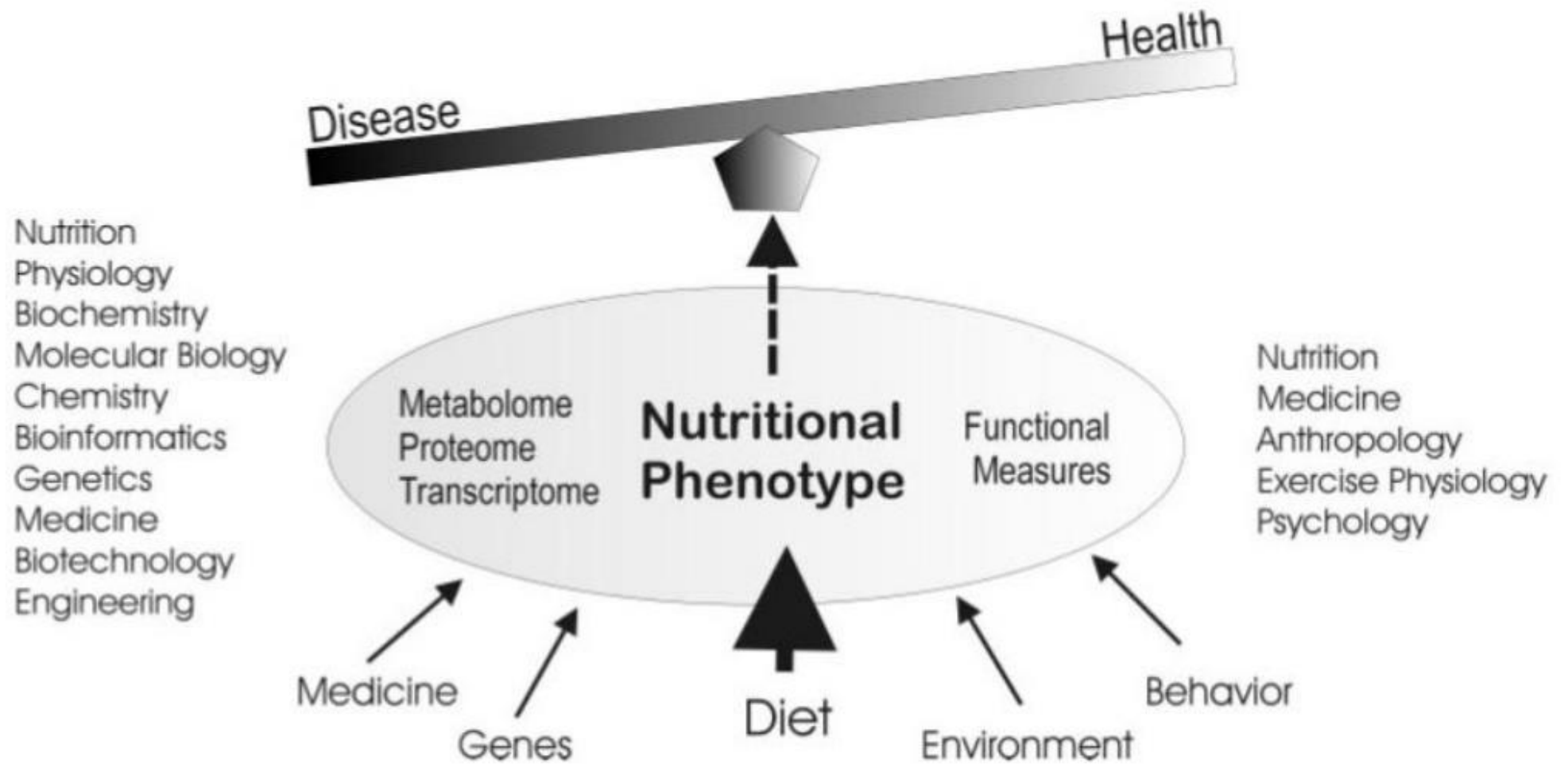


Nutritional phenotyping



The EAR is based on a specific criterion of adequacy, derived from a careful review of the literature. Reduction of disease risk is considered along with many other health parameters in the selection of that criterion.
- From USDA

Nutritional phenotype



Am J Clin Nutr. 2005 Mar;81(3):624-32.

Influence of apolipoprotein E genotype on fat-soluble plasma antioxidants in Spanish children.

Ortega H, Castilla P, Gómez-Coronado D, Garcés C, Benavente M, Rodríguez-Artalejo F, de Oya M, Lasunción MA.

Nimitphong et al. *Nutrition Journal* 2013, 12:39
<http://www.nutritionj.com/content/12/1/39>



RESEARCH

Open Access

Changes in circulating 25-hydroxyvitamin D according to vitamin D binding protein genotypes after vitamin D₃ or D₂ supplementation

Intra- and Inter-Individual Variations of Blood and Urinary Water-Soluble Vitamins in Japanese Young Adults Consuming a Semi-Purified Diet for 7 Days

J Nutr Sci Vitaminol, 55, 459–470, 2009

The Journal of Nutrition
Nutrient Requirements and Optimal Nutrition



J. Nutr. 138: 67–72, 2008

Folate Intake at RDA Levels Is Inadequate for Mexican American Men with the Methylene tetrahydrofolate Reductase 677TT Genotype^{1–3}

Claudia Solis,⁴ Kristin Veenema,⁴ Alexandre A. Ivanov,⁴ Sally Tran,⁴ Rui Li,⁴ Wei Wang,⁵ David J. Moriarty,⁶ Charles V. Maletz,⁷ and Marie A. Caudill^{8*}



The Journal of Nutrition
Nutritional Epidemiology

J. Nutr. 142: 866–871, 2012.

Genome-Wide Association Study Identifies Three Common Variants Associated with Serologic Response to Vitamin E Supplementation in Men^{1–4}

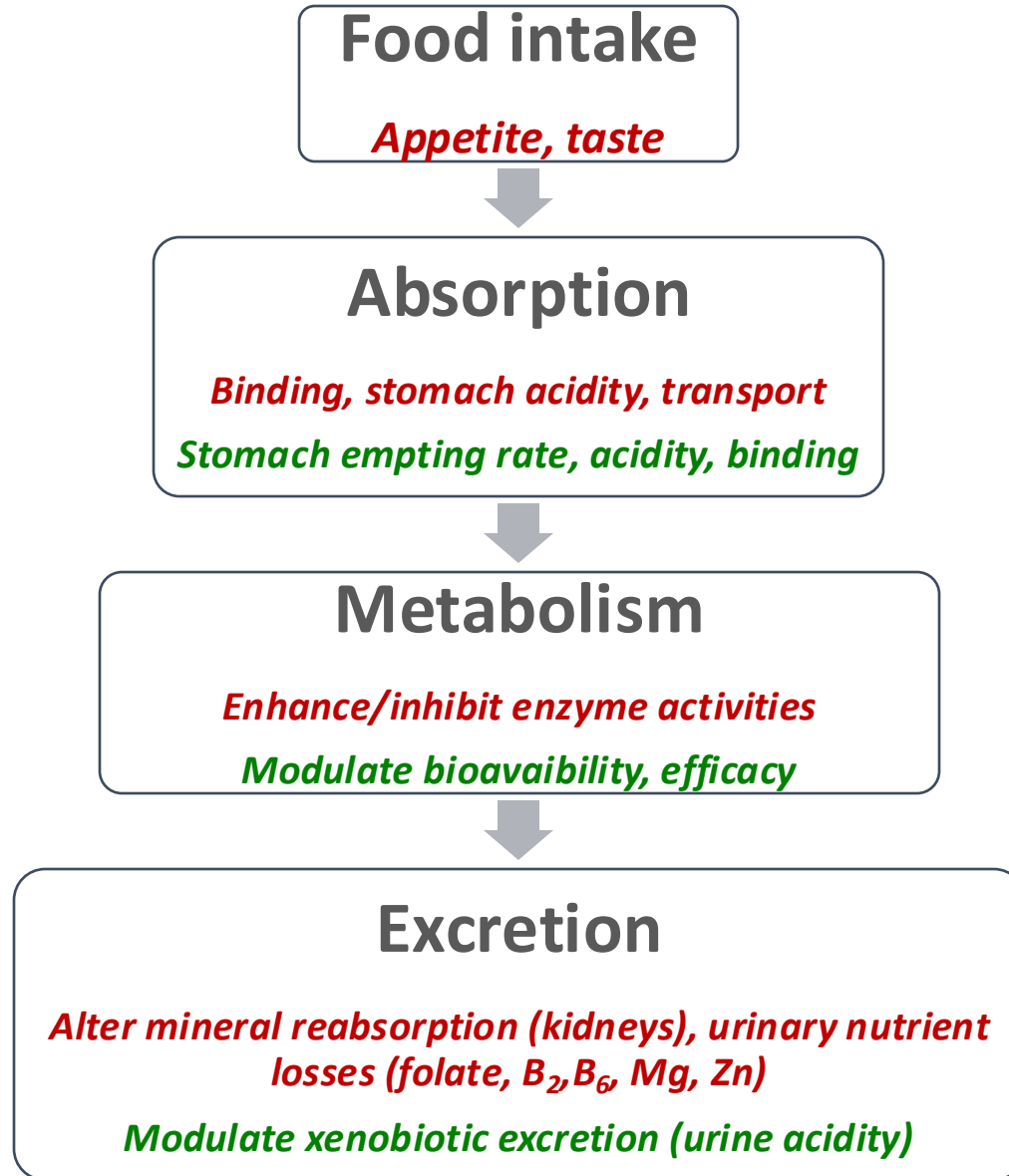
Jacqueline M. Major,⁵ Kai Yu,⁵ Charles C. Chung,⁶ Stephanie J. Weinstein,⁵ Meredith Yeager,⁶ William Wheeler,⁷ Kirk Snyder,⁷ Margaret E. Wright,⁸ Jarmo Virtamo,⁹ Stephen Chanock,^{5, 6} and Demetrius Albanes^{5*}

The complex interplay of drugs with nutrients

DRUGS



NUTRIENTS

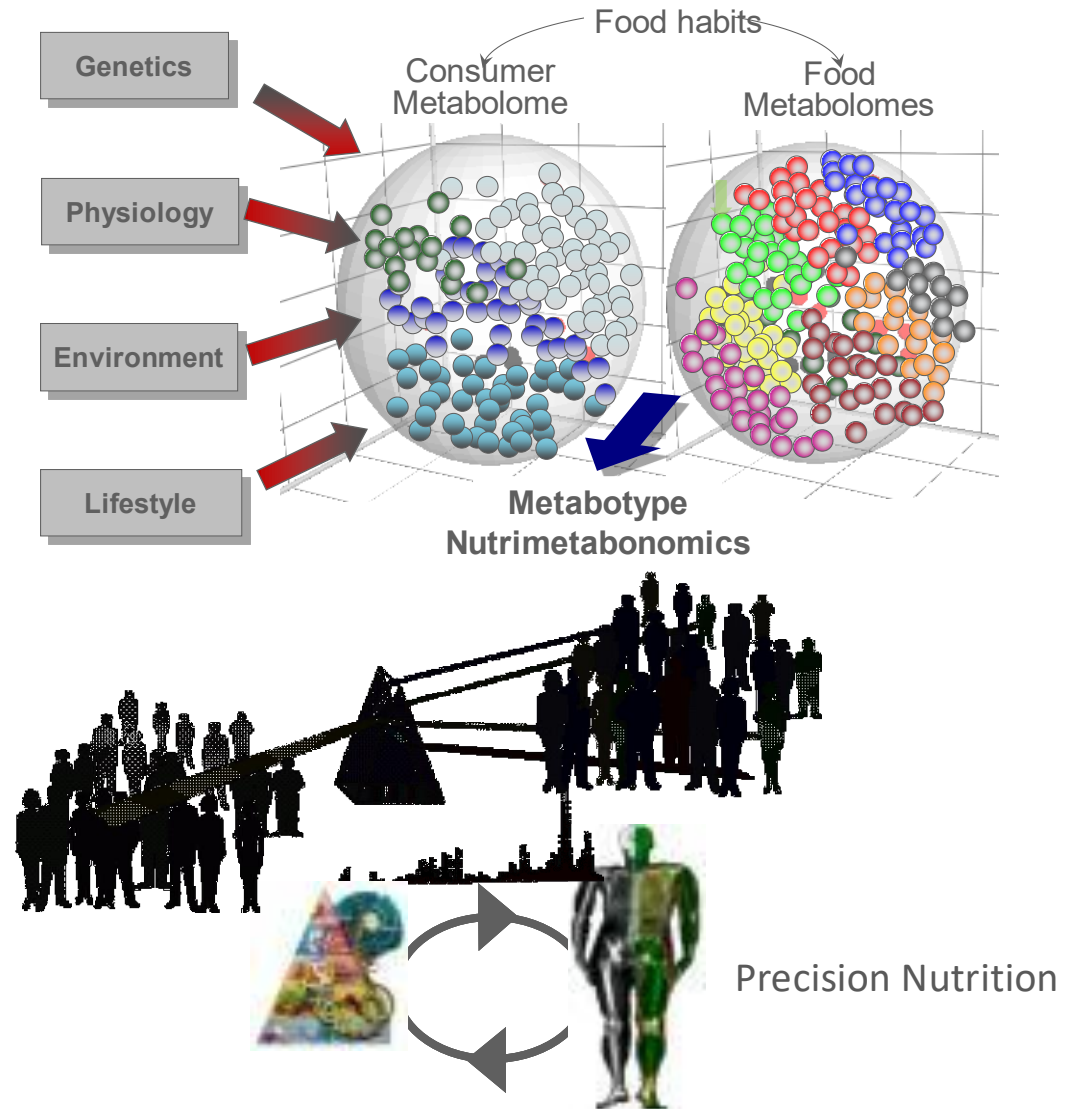


Workflow in precision nutrition

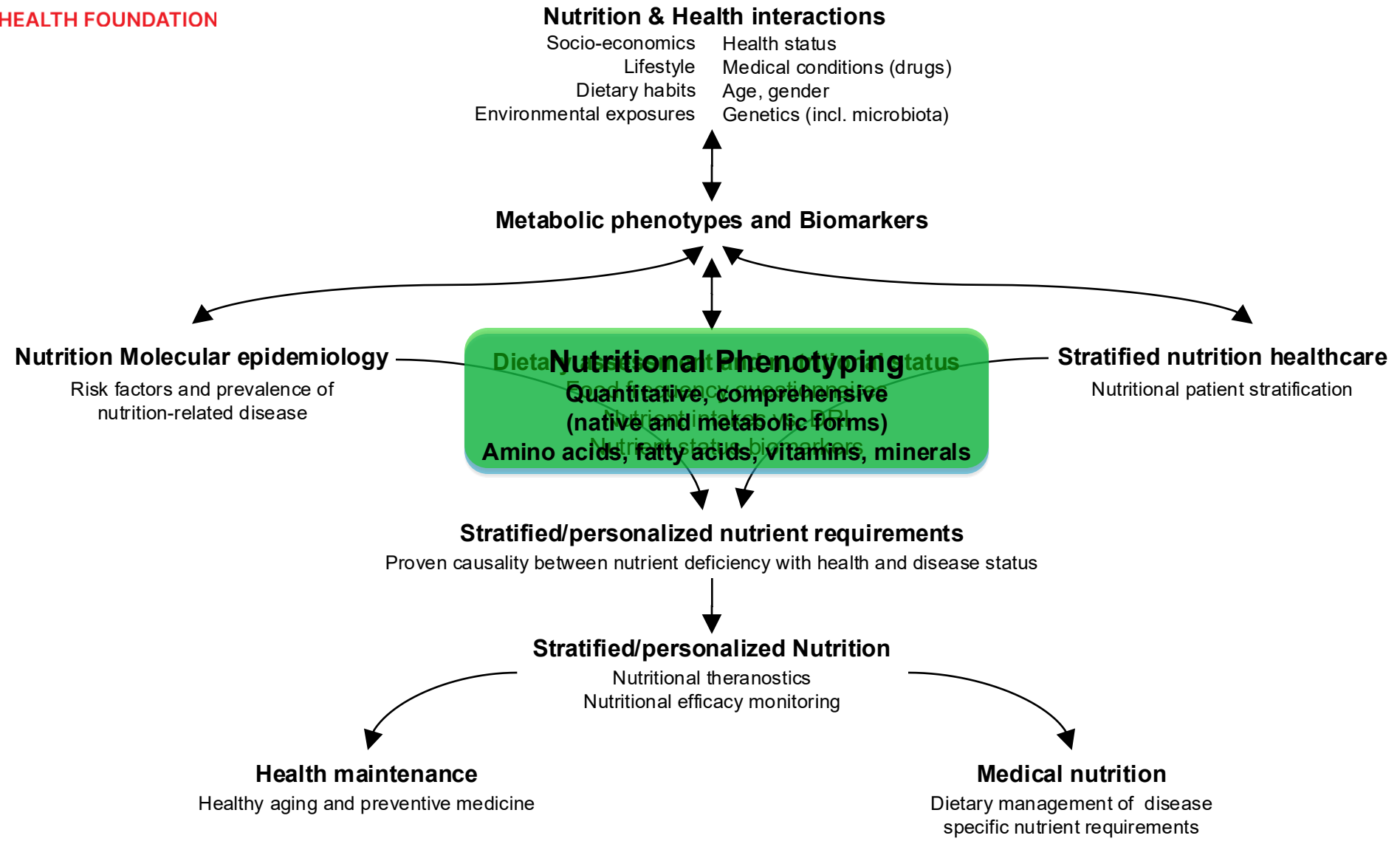
1 - Understanding of the nutrient-organism interaction and impact on health status
Nutrikinetics & nutridynamics

2 - Quantification of health optimization: Nutrition and health indicators (nutrition status)

3 - Implement personalized nutrition and monitor for efficacy



Towards Precision Nutrition



* From Rezzi et al. Trends in Analytical Chemistry, 2013