

## PUBLIC HEALTH NUTRITION

### Community Nutrition

- It deals with a **variety of food and nutrition** issues related to **individuals, families, and special groups** that have a common link in terms of a particular region, language, culture or health-related issues.
- This segment covers **public health nutrition, nutrition education and medical nutrition therapy.**
- Community nutrition is gaining importance in **health promotion and disease prevention**, since an individual's behavior is influenced by the living environment, local norms and beliefs.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) defines community as a **social group determined by geographic boundaries and/or common values or interests.**
- A community can also be defined on the basis of a **common interest or goal.**
- Many successful **health awareness and disease prevention** efforts such as improved services and awareness of certain community-specific problems have been possible in common-interest communities.
- Community nutrition initiatives aim at involving community nutrition and dietetics professionals **to provide nutrition services** according to the needs of the individuals through primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.
- **Primary prevention**
  - involves designing activities to prevent a disease or condition before it occurs.
  - Public health nutrition also focuses on the promotion of good health through nutrition, primary prevention of nutrition-related illness and maintaining the nutritional health of populations.
- **Secondary prevention**
  - - involves planning activities related to early diagnosis and treatment including screening for diseases.
- **Tertiary prevention**
  - - consists of designing activities to treat a disease state or condition such as malnutrition or injury in order to prevent it from progressing further.

**TABLE 1.1**  
**Scope of Practice of the Community Nutritionist and the Public Health Nutritionist**

**Community Nutritionist**

**Public Health Nutritionist**

Focus	Focuses on issues that affect the whole population rather than the specific dietary needs of individuals	Focuses on issues that affect the whole population rather than the specific dietary needs of individuals
Emphasis	Emphasizes promoting health and preventing disease in populations and groups	Emphasizes promoting health and preventing disease in populations
Target population	The population is circumscribed to a local level that may consist of homogenous groups of people	The population includes a wide spectrum of people and needs
Practice	The practice of community nutrition may include the delivery of nutrition programs and services	The practice of public health nutrition may include the assessment for and design, management, and evaluation of nutrition programs and services
Supervision	Community nutrition programs and services may be delivered by professionals and also by paraprofessionals who are trained and supervised by professionals	Public health nutritionists may train and supervise community nutritionists
Rules	Community nutritionist adheres to laws and policies; suggests policy	Public health nutritionist enforces laws; creates policy
Employment	Community nutritionists may be employed at the city or county levels, and by local nonprofit and for-profit agencies that deliver nutrition services. Community nutritionists may also be self-employed	Public health nutritionists may be employed at the federal, state, county, and city levels

## Rationale for growth monitoring

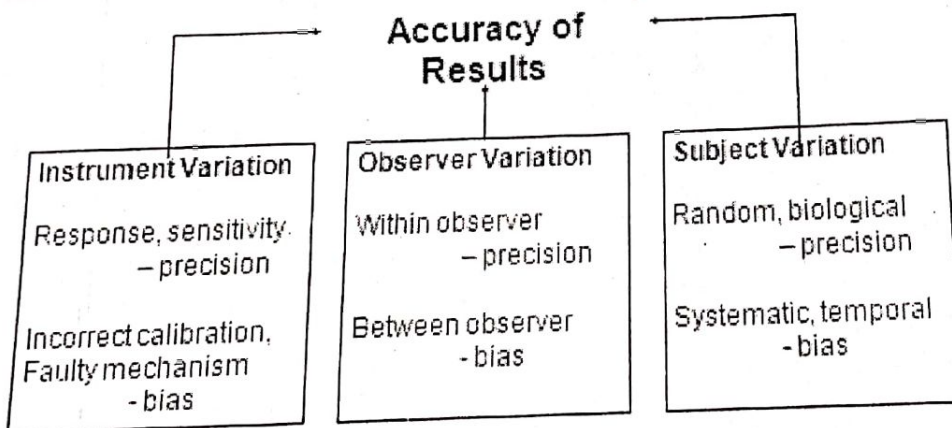
### Why Monitor Growth

- Growth is the most sensitive indicator of health
  - normal growth only occurs if a child is healthy
- Growth assessment is an essential part of the examination or investigation of any child.
- Allows objective detection of growth disorders at population level at earliest opportunity
- Early identification and treatment improves outcome.
- Identify under or over nutrition

### What does a growth chart measure

- Length for age:
  - whether an infant is an appropriate length for their age
- Weight for age:
  - whether an infant is an appropriate weight for their age
- Weight for length:
  - whether the weight and length of an infant are in proportion
- Head circumference for age:
  - information about brain development

## Issues in Measurement



## Minimising Error

- Careful measurements by trained measurers
- Standardised measuring technique
- Standardised recording technique
- Accurate well positioned equipment
- Appropriate equipment well maintained and calibrated
- Consider Growth data in the overall clinical context of the child
- Careful interpretation – plotting on centile chart and action
- Accuracy is vital
- Training is critical to accuracy and a successful programme
- Resources required to support ongoing training and audit



- Resources required both physical and personnel for programme delivery at local level

#### **National Standards for Growth Monitoring**

- Reduced number of mandatory growth monitoring assessments
  - birth
  - 6 to 8 week check
  - school entry
  - but children should be weighed at opportunistic times including birth, at immunisations and during child health surveillance checks
- Focus on accuracy of measurement, documentation and interpretation of findings.

#### **National Standards for Growth Monitoring- Equipment**

- Electronic self zeroing scales
- Supine length measure (infantometer or baby mat)
- Thin non stretchable tape measure