

Jean-Pierre Habicht

Web Bio

Information

Biography

Biographical Statement

Obtained medical training in Switzerland, further pediatric training in the US, a PhD in Nutritional Biochemistry from MIT and public health training (MPH) from Harvard, worked in Guatemala for the Institute of Nutrition of Central America as a World Health Organization medical officer in charge of primary health care and epidemiological studies, and then worked for the US National Center for Health Statistics on nutritional surveillance. Came to Cornell University in 1977 to develop a program of research and study in nutritional epidemiology that included the biological and social determinants of malnutrition in developing countries with emphasis on program development and evaluation to prevent and alleviate malnutrition in mothers and children.

Teaching

Professional

Current Professional Activities

My principal interests are in designing, developing, and testing interventions and strategies to improve maternal and child nutrition in developing countries. Thus, much of my research has focused on elucidating the nutritional determinants of health, performance, and survival in mothers and in children from conception through childhood. The major outcomes I have studied include fetal, infant, and child growth; fetal, infant, and child morbidity and mortality; maternal body composition, lactation performance, and duration of postpartum amenorrhea and subfertility; and anemia and vitamin A nutrition. I have developed and tested nutritional surveillance systems that can trigger interventions to prevent famines, and more importantly to help design policy to improve nutritional status. Recently I have been investigating how to improve the delivery of nutrition to those who need it, including the development and implementation of nutrition sensitive programs. My expertise is also pertinent to U.S. domestic nutrition and health and some of my work relates to hunger and nutritional interventions in the U.S.A. These interests are developed in retirement by presentations, mentoring and participating in research at Cornell, at the International Food Policy Research Institute, at the Mexican National Institute of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO), by participating in conferences, and by serving on policy venues such as the WHO Expert Committee on Nutrition, and the Board of Helen Keller International, an international non-governmental humanitarian organization

Research

Current Research Activities

The use of epidemiology and qualitative methods to develop knowledge for interventions to improve the nutrition of the poor; improving the effectiveness of programs and policies through evaluation and nutritional surveillance.

Specifically I participate in research on evaluating the effectiveness of iron fortification in Haiti and China in children including the likelihood that the delivery systems used will result in the same impact as the programs are expanded. I have been involved with developing the construct and use of Program Theory also called Program Impact Pathways (PIP) in planning, implementing and evaluation programs in Mexico, Haiti and Peru.

Extension

Education

Courses

Websites

Administration

Publications

Selected Publications

Ruel MT, Menon P, Habicht JP, Loechl C, Bergeron G, Pelto G, Arimond M, Maluccio J, Michaud L, Hankebo B. Age-based preventive targeting of food assistance and behaviour change and communication for reduction of childhood undernutrition in Haiti: a cluster randomised trial. *Lancet* 371:588–95, 2008 see critique by J196bWhite H. Letter to the editor: Tackling childhood undernutrition. *Lancet* 371:539-40, 2008

Menon P, Mbuya M, Habicht J-P, Pelto G, Loechl CU, Ruel MT. Assessing supervisory and motivational factors in the context of a program evaluation in rural Haiti. *J.Nutr* 138 (3):634-637,2008

Habicht JP. Malnutrition kills directly, not indirectly. *Lancet* 371 (9626):1749-1750, 2008

LeRoy JL, Razak AA, Habicht JP. Only children of the head of household benefit from increased household food diversity in Northern Ghana. *J.Nutr* 138 (11):2258-2263, 2008

Loechl CU, Menon P, Arimond M, Ruel MT, Pelto G, Habicht J-P, Michaud L. (2009, Web publication Dec. 2008) Using programme theory to assess the feasibility of delivering micronutrient Sprinkles through a food-assisted maternal and child health and nutrition programme in rural Haiti *Maternal & Child Nutrition*, 5: 33-48.