

Anthropometric Perspective on Nutritional Status

S.P. Singh

Department of Human Biology, Punjabi University, Patiala 147 002, Punjab, India

KEYWORDS Anthropometry. Energy Homeostasis. Nutritional Status. Malnutrition. Birth Outcome

ABSTRACT Anthropometry is emerging as an important indicator of the physical status of individuals and populations which in turn highlights their nutritional status and the history of their economic development. A number of economic historians, sociologists, anthropologists and medical doctors have come together to address these issues where height cycles (upturn and downturns) have lots of information to offer on the economics of the nations. The human body grows naturally as a result of positive energy balance during childhood and adolescence but the body weight is generally maintained afterwards. The role of insulin and leptin along with a number of other molecules in their pathway to regulate energy homeostasis has been discussed. The anthropometric indicators of nutritional status include height-age, weight-age and weight-height standards. The importance of arm circumference, head circumference, chest circumference, skin folds and waist-hip circumference ratio in judging the growth of children, malnutrition, over nutrition. The anthropometric indicators of the pregnant mothers serve the purpose of forecasting about the birth outcome too. The tendencies of present day generation of growing taller and bigger over their predecessor as results of modernization and economic development during the last two centuries are being warmly welcomed indicating overall improvement in the general living standards of the people. But this skewed development cry for urgent attention of the people and the governments of the third world countries to redefine their priorities of economic development so that the health, nutrition and living standards of people is uplifted.