

## Correspondence

### Regional disparity in prevalence of malnutrition in Saudi children

To the Editor

El-Mouzan et al<sup>1</sup> showed in their interesting study on the regional disparity in prevalence of malnutrition in Saudi children that malnutrition prevailed in Southwestern region of the country. They thankfully addressed some possible explanations for that disparity. The changing life style and dietary habits of Saudi school students could significantly contribute to the prevailing malnutrition in the Southwestern region of the country.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, altitude truly influences the development of malnutrition. The prevalence of the 3 types of protein energy malnutrition (PEM) namely, underweight, wasting, and stunting were found to be significantly higher at low altitude than at high altitude in the Southwestern region of the country. The difference in PEM between high and low altitude preschool children could be related to the milder environmental conditions at higher altitudes, and the higher incidence of tropical infections in lowland children.<sup>3</sup> An in-depth determination of risk factors contributing to malnutrition through wide-based studies is pertinent. Finally, I do agree with El-Mouzan et al<sup>1</sup> that national health planning programs must consider that regional disparity, and effective efforts should be directed to

counteract the related risk factors and institute suitable nutritional programs.

*Mahmood D. Al-Mendalawi*  
Department of Pediatrics  
Al-Kindy College of Medicine  
Baghdad University  
Baghdad, Iraq.

#### Reply from the Author

I read the above letter and I have no comments on its content.

*Mohammad El-Mouzan*  
Department of Pediatrics  
College of Medicine  
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

#### References

1. El-Mouzan MI, Al-Herbish AS, Al-Salloum AA, Foster PJ, Al-Omar AA, Qurachi MM, et al. Regional disparity in prevalence of malnutrition in Saudi children. *Saudi Med J* 2010; 31: 550-554.
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#### Related topics

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