Editorial

In this issue of *Annals of Nutrition and Metabolism* (*Annales Nestlé*), we address the topic of current complementary feeding (CF) practices. CF (also known as weaning) describes the method(s) of infant feeding from 6 to 24 months of age when breast milk alone is no longer sufficient for the global needs of the child. The articles include contemporary issues of CF in developed countries, food fortification, overnutrition during the CF period, and one article discusses issues beyond the realm of nutrition. A tradition of the *Annales Nestlé* is to invite authors who are well known in the field. In this issue, however, except for one of the chapters, we thought of giving the opportunity to several young professionals from African developing countries, in the hope that this will broaden the publication's audience.

The first article reports on the growing literature on the impact of fortification of contemporary foods on growth and development. Micronutrients are noted as major fortifiers in common food vehicles. It further opines that fortification is rather a metabolic process in growth and development. The articles which met the minimum selection criteria identified milk, iodine, maize meal porridge, and vegetable oils as recurring fortification vehicles in the context of CF. However, the review reflects outcomes that still do not demonstrate direct cause and effect relationships between fortification and growth but rather evidence of implied linkages.

The second article summarizes a review of systematic reviews and key articles that report the relationship between CF and childhood obesity. The article acknowledges that specific risk parameters pivotal to this association are not as firmly established. In this review, early introduction of CF (before the 4th month of life), high protein and energy content of the feeds, and nonadherence to evidence-proven feeding guidelines have been found contributory to overweight and obesity later in life.

The third article looks at issues whose relationships with nutrition are somewhat indirect. The roles of the mature digestive system and the acquisition of some essential neurodevelopmental milestones are described. The impact of progressive exposure of the infant to a variety of textures and tastes, administered in the appropriate condition including timing and amounts, on the successful transition to the second year of life and incorporation of family foods is explored. The evidence on the role of parental education in avoiding common mistakes which are usually transient but that sometimes can lead to lengthier situations that are more difficult to resolve is discussed.

The final CF article from Spain was written by an authority in the field who restates the importance of appropriate feeding strategies during the transition from breastfeeding towards normal family diets. The paper recognizes that CF should meet nutritional requirements in this age stage, avoiding nutritional deficiencies or non-optimal introduction of certain types of food and their subsequent negative effects on early and later health. Dr. Campoy and colleagues then identify the basis of recommendations on CF in developed countries while adding that further research should focus on better knowledge about the content, timing, and health outcomes of CF. The paper winds up with the observation that these recommendations should be implemented through multi-component approaches involving healthcare professionals, community, and parents, emphasizing broader aspects of a healthy lifestyle for the infant.

We hope the reader will find this issue of *Annals of Nutrition and Metabolism* (*Annales Nestlé*) informative and easy to read.

Carlos Lifschitz
Fred N. Were