

NUTRITION AND INFECTION IN
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BY

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ABSTRACT

This paper was written at the request of the Editor of the American journal "Science" for their special issue devoted to the world food problem published in 1975. The important synergistic relationship between malnutrition and infections is discussed and reviewed. Examples are given both of infectious diseases which adversely effect nutritional status and of the mechanisms by which malnutrition reduces the body's ability to withstand infections.

It is suggested that these twin health problems are better tackled in unison rather than independently. The control of infectious diseases and the improvement of nutrition both deserve a high priority in development plans. It is argued that improved infant and toddler mortality rates and a reduction in the prevalence of malnutrition may be better indicators of development than figures giving per capita income, automobiles per 1000 families or other more traditional economic indicators. A reduction in childhood death rates may also be a pre-requisite to successful family planning efforts.