

The Role of Halal Food in Healthy Lifestyle

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ABSTRACT

Today, healthy life and healthy aging are concepts that have become much more important than ever. The covid-19 pandemic has especially made this much more pronounced. Nutrition and life habits are important for a healthy life. Increasing industrialization and technological developments in the 20th century have caused many radical changes especially in food and nutrition. These changes have increased the importance of halal food which creates a very important protective and safe area in nutrition. Although the food is suitable for the concept of halal food, they can also have harmful effects for the health in the short and long term if their naturalness are partially or completely degraded. The increase in chronic diseases related to nutrition especially causes an increase of the sick and elderly population in the world. Besides, this puts a huge financial burden on countries. It is extremely important to make production planning in a way that the food will have positive effects on human health in the processes from production to consumption by furthering the concept of halal food. In this context, it will be very beneficial for humanity to explain the concept of halal food to the whole world as a global health policy by carrying it beyond a religious requirement.


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Introduction

Healthy life has always been the primary goal of human beings. Especially today, healthy life and healthy aging are more important concepts for the whole world than ever before. The covid-19 pandemic ¹, in which all countries of the world have been fighting together for the

last year, has made this much more pronounced. Therefore, people's awareness of personal health has increased and they have become more sensitive ^{2,3}.

The populations of the countries are aging rapidly all over the world. The world population is predicted to be about ten billion by 2050 according to data Fig. 2 ⁴.

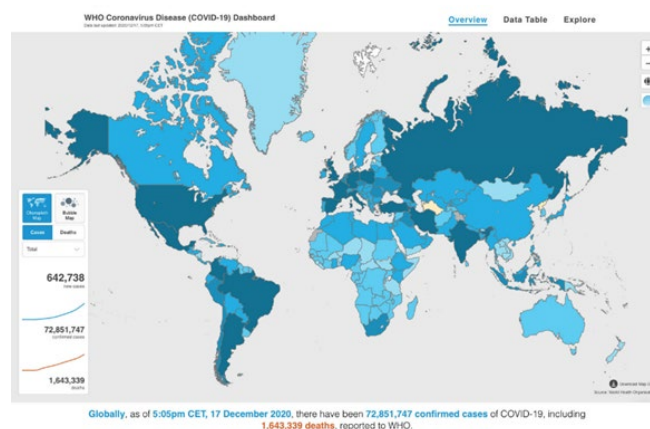


Fig. 1. WHO (World Health Organization) Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard ¹

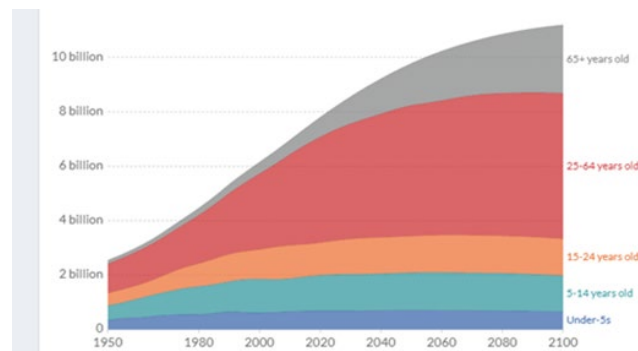


Fig. 2. World population projections

The number of people aged sixty-five and over will be 1.548.900.000 in the world population by 2050 according to United Nations's World Population Prospects 2019 report (Fig. 3) ⁵.

Therefore, as this data shows, at least one fifth of the world's population in 2050 will probably be people aged sixty-five and over. This means that the aging rate is quite high in the world. At the same time, statistical projections show that chronic diseases such as diabetes will be increasing considerably in the following years.

Diabetes is one of the worrying health problems of the 21st century. According to data, the number

of adults living with diabetes has tripled in the past 20 years ⁶. The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) estimates that there will be 578 million adults with diabetes by 2030, and 700 million by 2045 (Fig. 4) ⁶.

It is predicted that health expenditures will increase as a result of rapid aging and rapid increase in chronic diseases in the world (Fig. 5) ⁶.

Due to all these alarming changes in the world, The World Health Organization has declared 2020 to 2030 as the "Decade of Healthy Aging". A preliminary report for this was presented to the World Health Assembly in May 2020 ⁷.

World

	1950	1970	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2030	2050	2075	2100
Population												
Total population (thousands)	2 536 431	3 700 437	5 327 231	6 143 494	6 541 907	6 956 824	7 379 797	7 794 799	8 548 487	9 735 034	10 577 288	10 875 394
Median age (years) (a)	23.6	21.5	24.1	26.3	27.4	28.5	29.6	30.9	33.0	36.2	39.2	41.9
Population under age 15 (thousands)	869 608	1 389 143	1 748 101	1 851 319	1 841 053	1 876 541	1 931 326	1 983 649	2 019 462	2 055 659	2 014 256	1 897 705
Population aged 15-24 (thousands)	462 384	669 320	1 009 043	1 085 432	1 182 711	1 215 717	1 199 207	1 209 584	1 293 877	1 338 497	1 357 401	1 305 863
Population aged 25-64 (thousands)	1 075 729	1 445 760	2 241 877	2 784 535	3 043 271	3 337 877	3 641 717	3 873 960	4 237 660	4 792 026	5 140 708	5 215 163
Population aged 65+ (thousands)	128 709	196 215	328 211	422 209	474 872	526 688	607 548	727 606	997 488	1 548 852	2 064 923	2 456 663
Percentage of population under age 15	34.3	37.5	32.8	30.1	28.1	27.0	26.2	25.5	23.6	21.1	19.0	17.5
Percentage of population aged 15-24	18.2	18.1	18.9	17.7	18.1	17.5	16.3	15.5	15.1	13.8	12.8	12.0
Percentage of population aged 25-64	42.4	39.1	42.1	45.3	46.5	48.0	49.4	49.7	49.6	49.2	48.6	48.0
Percentage of population aged 65+	5.1	5.3	6.2	6.9	7.3	7.6	8.2	9.3	11.7	15.9	19.5	22.6
Dependency ratios (per 100)												
Total dependency ratio (b)	135.8	156.0	137.6	120.6	115.0	108.4	102.7	101.2	101.7	103.2	105.8	108.5
Child dependency ratio (c)	123.8	142.4	123.0	105.5	99.4	92.6	86.0	82.4	78.2	70.8	65.6	61.4
Potential support ratio (d)	8.4	7.4	6.8	6.6	6.4	6.3	6.0	5.3	4.3	3.1	2.5	2.1

Fig.3. World Population Prospects 2019, Volume II: Demographic Profiles

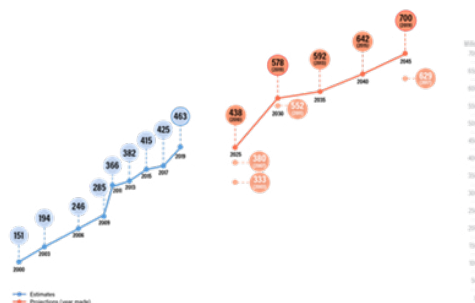


Fig. 4. Estimated numbers of adults with diabetes (in millions) from IDF Diabetes Atlas (1st to 9th edition)

Healthy Living and Healthy Aging

Aging is a multifactorial concept and there is no “Typical” elderly. The changes that occur in the body during aging are individual. It is possible to age in a healthy way by controlling the individual and environmental factors affecting body health and improving these changes in the body. Implementing the global strategy and action plans on ageing and health will undoubtedly contribute to the realisation of the goals for the present and the future generations all over the world.

From this point of view, the Decade of Healthy Aging (2020-2030) is actually an opportunity for all countries in the world. The United Nations offers a very comprehensive infrastructure that brings together governments, professionals, academia, media, civil society, international institutions, and the private sector, both within itself and in interaction with other countries.

It is very important to manage all factors affecting human health with a holistic approach to maintain a healthy life. Because this holistic approach prepares a ground that facilitates healthy aging in societies. Nutrition and lifestyle

changes, which are two very fundamental issues to maintain a healthy life and cure diseases, are the main criteria of the holistic approach.

It is a fact, also clearly seen from hundreds of researches results, that a healthy life is the first step of healthy aging. For this reason, to achieve a healthy life in all aspects should be the primary goal.

Healthy Nutrition for Healthy Living

There are two crucial factors for a healthy life and healthy aging. The first one is a healthy nutrition and the other one is healthy lifestyle. For healthy aging, it is extremely important to manage these two indispensable factors carefully.

Healthy nutrition and healthy life habits are very crucial for healthy life and preventive medicine. Because as Hippocrates who is called the father of medicine said “Food is medicine”. In addition, in the history of Islamic medicine, Al-Razi who is one of the most respected scientists in medicine also mentioned the importance of nutrition for a healthy life in his works.

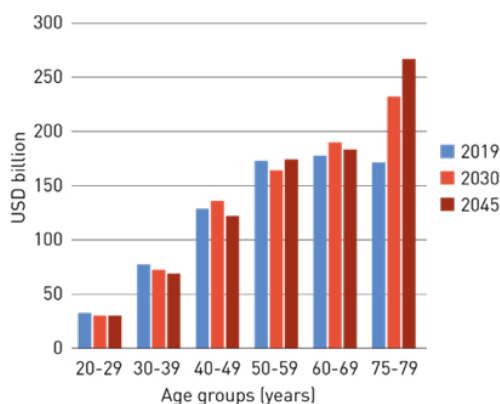


Fig. 5. Total diabetes-related health expenditure (USD, United States Dollar, billion) by age group

In the later period, in the medical encyclopaedia called *Al-qanun-fi-al-tibb*, which is the most famous work written by the distinguished scientist and physician Ibn-i Sina, known as Avicenna in the west, there are many chapters on nutrition, foods and the regulation of nutrition in diseases.

Nutrition is also very important for integrative medicine approach. Nutrition and lifestyle are two important determinants that can be modified in maintaining the health. Nutrition is a powerful determinant of health and well-being both for the person and for the populations. Nutrition is actually a very effective transformation tool and also the transformation process for our health. Because with every bite we eat, we have the power to transform our cells and our body⁸.

There are many studies on the importance of nutrition, especially in the treatment of chronic diseases. Especially in the last two decades, we can see an increase in studies on preventive medicine and integrative medicine Fig.6^{9,10}. Because most people want both to be healthy and to age healthy Fig.6¹¹.

Although there are many other sub factors, changing the diet allows us to get very effective

results in the body for the treatment of diseases. Studies show that when the people start making healthy choices in their diet, their health conditions become much better even in a very short time.

The Importance of Halal Food in Food Safety and Healthy Nutrition

A basic definition is made in the Quran with the concept of halal which means lawful, permitted as the main determinant criterion for the life of Muslims. In addition to the concept of halal, the concept of tayyib, which means clean, pure and safe, is often emphasized together. When we look at the nutrition in this context, the concept of halal food creates a very safe, clean and protective area in nutrition.

“O people! Eat of the lawful and pure things in the earth and follow not in the footsteps of Satan. For surely, he is your open enemy;” Al-Quran, Surat Al-Baqarah (2:168)¹².

Naturalness and cleanliness of the foods in nutrition is strongly emphasized in terms of both health and psychological consequences in Islam.



Fig. 6. Graphics show that increasing in the studies on preventive and integrative medicine, and also on healthy aging according to Pubmed data

The concept of “*Halalan tayyiban*” indicates that food should not only be halal, but also clean and safe at all stages from production to consumption. The implementation of the concept of halal food has already been going on for centuries in Muslim populations.

As a result of the implementation of halal food concept, first of all, it has provided a healthy nutrition and also has significantly protected communities from infectious diseases to a certain extent for the Muslim societies. For this reason, halal food has also been a very important factor in healthy aging in Muslim societies for centuries. From all this information, we can clearly see that the halal food is very closely related to all these factors such as healthy nutrition, healthy life style, preventive medicine, integrative medicine and healthy aging.

Looking to the Future with Halal Food Concept from Production to Consumption

In the 20th century, as a result of industrial and technological developments, food and nutrition areas were also affected. Food production patterns have changed and production processes have become more and more complex. There have been fundamental changes in agriculture and farming. In addition, many food additives began to be used in nutrition and food production. Today, the use of a large number and variety of food additives in food production has gradually been increased.

Of course, the important results of these changes have been seen all over the world. With these radical changes in food and food processing diet related chronic diseases also increased especially in the last two decades. Because the partial or complete deterioration of the naturalness of food can lead to negative consequences for human health in both short and long terms.

Today with all these changes, the importance

of the concept of halal food has increased even more. When we look at again all these data, we need to think beyond the concept of halal food for a healthy life and healthy aging. Our first and basic measure in nutrition is halal food. But is this halal food healthy or not? We need to think about it deeply. Because as we change our food, this food also changes our body.

In addition to the compliance of the foods with the concept of halal food, the important point is that the naturalness of the food is deteriorated by some processes and interventions such as food additives. Although it seems to be suitable with the concept of halal food, they can have unexpected harmful effects in the short and long term. Hundreds of studies are a warning for us.

The importance of a healthy and clean diet is now understood all over the world. Due to the importance of the subject, the World Health Organization declared the period between 2016 and 2025 as the Nutrition Action Decade.

It is estimated that the Muslim population in the world will at least double, constitute 27% of the global population by 2030¹³. From this point of view, increasing the benefits of halal food or at least maintaining the protection of naturalness for halal food in terms of production processes will significantly prevent chronic diseases that increase in Muslim societies and therefore in the world population. The successes achieved with the measures taken and action plans in this regard will also be able to set an effective and positive example for countries experiencing socio-economic problems with increasing chronic diseases.

Conclusion

In the last two decades, awareness of healthy nutrition and healthy living has increased significantly due to increasing chronic diseases,

rapid aging and especially the Covid-19 pandemic. In order to prevent diseases and strengthen the concept of healthy life, effective measures have begun to be taken in many countries, especially on healthy nutrition. It is very important to explain the concept of halal food, which is already applied in Muslim societies, to the rest of the world in terms of the healthy and safe food area it creates.

In the context of all these data, it is extremely important to make food production planning in a way that will have positive effects on human health by preserving the naturalness of food from production to consumption by furthering the concept of halal food.

With the process regulations to be made in this regard, the concept of halal food will not only be a religious requirement, but it will also provide effective results as a clean and healthy diet in accordance with the new age functional medicine understanding. At the same time, making it an extremely important health policy for a healthy life will be beneficial for the whole world and all humanity in socio-economic aspects.

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