

faculty, and to discuss with them any special needs of the medical student.

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Dear Sirs:

The Editorial Board invitation to comment on Dr. György's paper "Teaching and Training in Nutrition" made me write down the enclosed considerations on this problem in my country. Since nutrition is an important international affair, I think it would be a quite useful contribution, if people from different countries could give their own thinking and suggestions on this subject.

#### VIEWS ON NUTRITION PROGRAMS IN BRAZIL

Although the importance and development of nutrition sciences is well known all over the world, its specific application is getting behind this over all knowledge.

Dr. György's editorial on teaching and training in nutrition calls attention to some of the causes that are responsible for this situation in the United States and suggests as a possible remedy the appointment of a coordinator for nutritional teaching in American medical schools.

As far as nutritional teaching, the situation in Brazilian universities is quite similar to the one found in the United States. At medical schools some nutrition is taught in the physiology, biochemistry and pathology departments and specifically, little in the clinical departments. No one is aware of the importance of nutrition as an unity, and in our special structure of universities, I do not believe it would be possible to have a person with sufficient power to coordinate an interdepartmental program on nutrition.

The importance of an integrated scientific nutrition program is still too far away from the thoughts of our university officials, nothing being necessary to say in relation to the government and to the people in general.

It has been my position in a project of an

Institute of Nutrition for Children sent to International Agencies interested in food problems, that a faster way to achieve nutrition training and education in Brazil would be to put the trained personnel, which we already have, working *full time* and *together* in the *same place*, preferably in an isolated institute. This institute should be connected with a medical or public health school but should be under an independent chairmanship.

The policy of some international agencies has been to try to develop nutritional programs, helping departments of medical schools which are overburdened with teaching and their own research programs. What happens in general is that it is only possible for these people, if it is a department of biochemistry for example, to study some aspects of food chemistry. There is little opportunity for the same group to perform biological assays in animals or in man, not to say field experiments.

To be really effective, this help should come to those groups of people, working in the same place, that will be able to deal with the different aspects not only of nutrition research, but also of teaching for doctors, nurses, social workers and especially for elementary and high school teachers.

It would be useful also if these institutes of nutrition could be located outside the big cities, so that they could do research and graduate work and teach people who would work in the countryside.

As for the presence of a foreign nutritional advisor in these nutrition study centers, not only would they be useful but also necessary. It is my thinking that they would be most welcome, especially if these centers were connected with the universities and if these advisors stayed for a longer time than a two or four day visit. A foreign advisor in an organized nutrition center can help train and teach several persons. It is a much better program than to send promising young men to stay in the United States for two or three years who will have to return to their country and work in a secondary position at a medical school or a government place, or will have to spend part of their time in private practice

A further suggestion that could be made to



UNICEF, FAO, WHO and other international agencies, and that I think would be most useful in developing new nutrition programs in a country, is to promote periodic conferences and courses on nutrition where people really interested in the problem could get together, exchange ideas and stimulate research, and where as a consequence a conscientiousness

of the nutrition situation of their country will develop—a very necessary step for future projects in this field.

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