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# Sustaining healthy mothers and children in Jordan: prioritizing effective food systems policies and health/nutrition interventions

Patrick Webb/Tufts University



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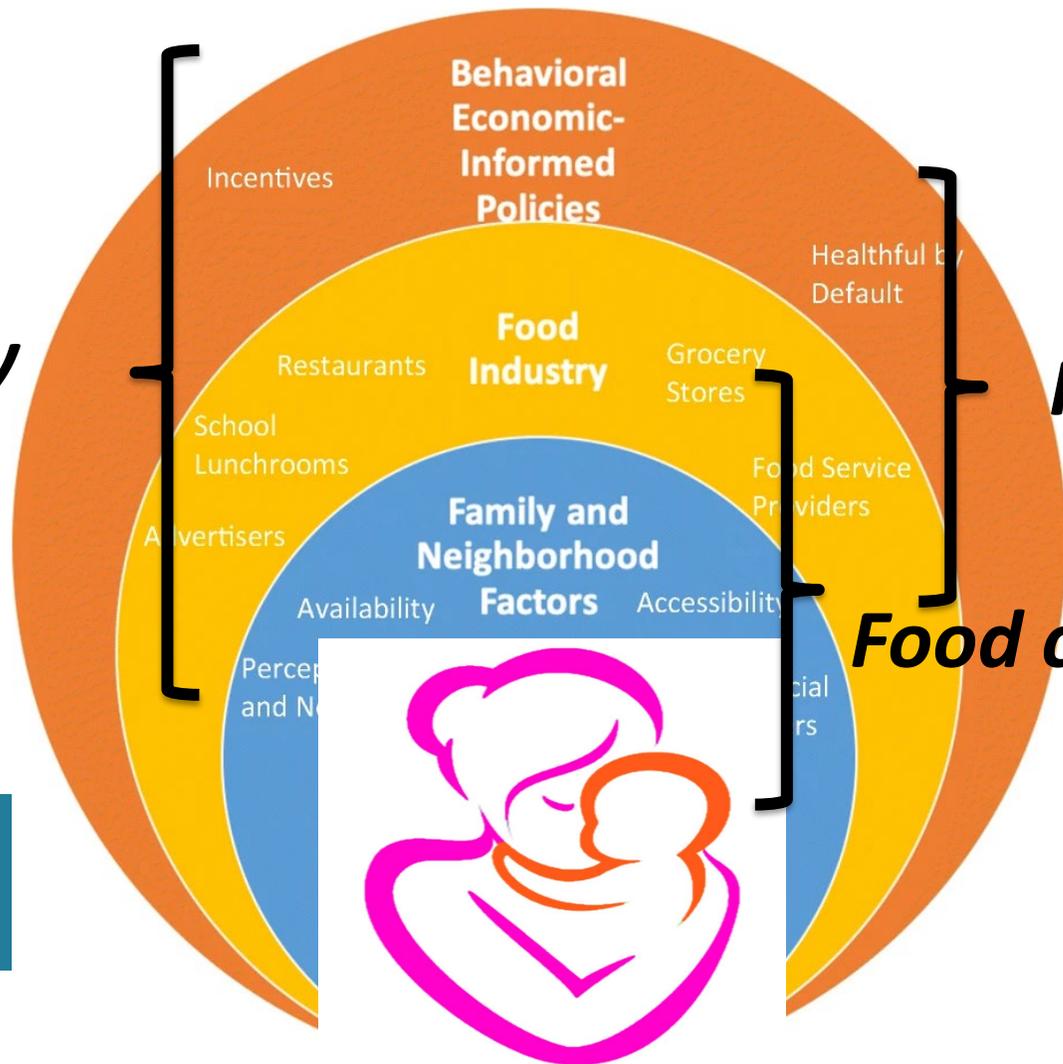
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***Food security***



***Food environment***

***Food choice***



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Source: Cory et al. (2021) <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40614-021-00294-y>  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCT5RyOgtOqN\\_PXkU6Ww\\_iaA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCT5RyOgtOqN_PXkU6Ww_iaA)



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## THIS TALK IN A NUTSHELL

- The initial affordable healthy diet for any child is exclusive breastmilk! But the child, mother *and everyone else* requires **affordable healthy diets** across the lifecycle.
- Why? **Diets are a top driver of the global burden disease**, including in Jordan. Thus, achieving 'health' needs high quality IYCF services, and *also* high-quality diets.
- Like hygiene behaviours, diet choices are a '**modifiable risk factor**', both linked to disease prevention and effectiveness of health investments. **Coherent multi-sector policies aiming for universal access to high quality diets are key.**



## Food Systems Summit

### Jordan's Pathway to Transforming to Efficient and Sustainable Food Systems by 2030

“Jordan’s vision is to *transform its food systems* to more efficient and sustainable ones that contribute to improved availability and self-reliance, access to *nutritious food and healthy diets for all* inhabitants at all times by 2030.”

Source: Gov. Jordan (2021) National Pathway document for the UNFSS





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Poor diets are now responsible for a **quarter** of all deaths

- a 15% rise since 2010



Find out more in the 2021 Global Nutrition Report  
[globalnutritionreport.org](http://globalnutritionreport.org)



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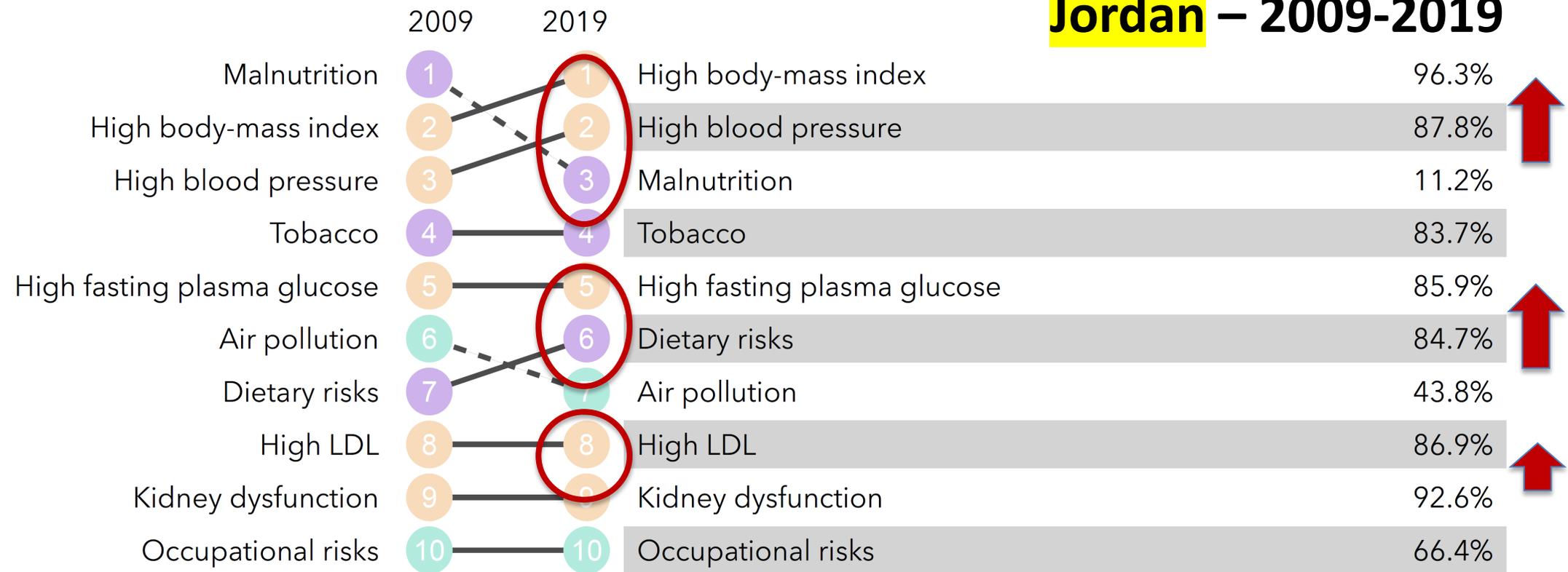
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# What risk factors drive the most death and disability combined?

- Metabolic risks
- Environmental/occupational risks
- Behavioral risks

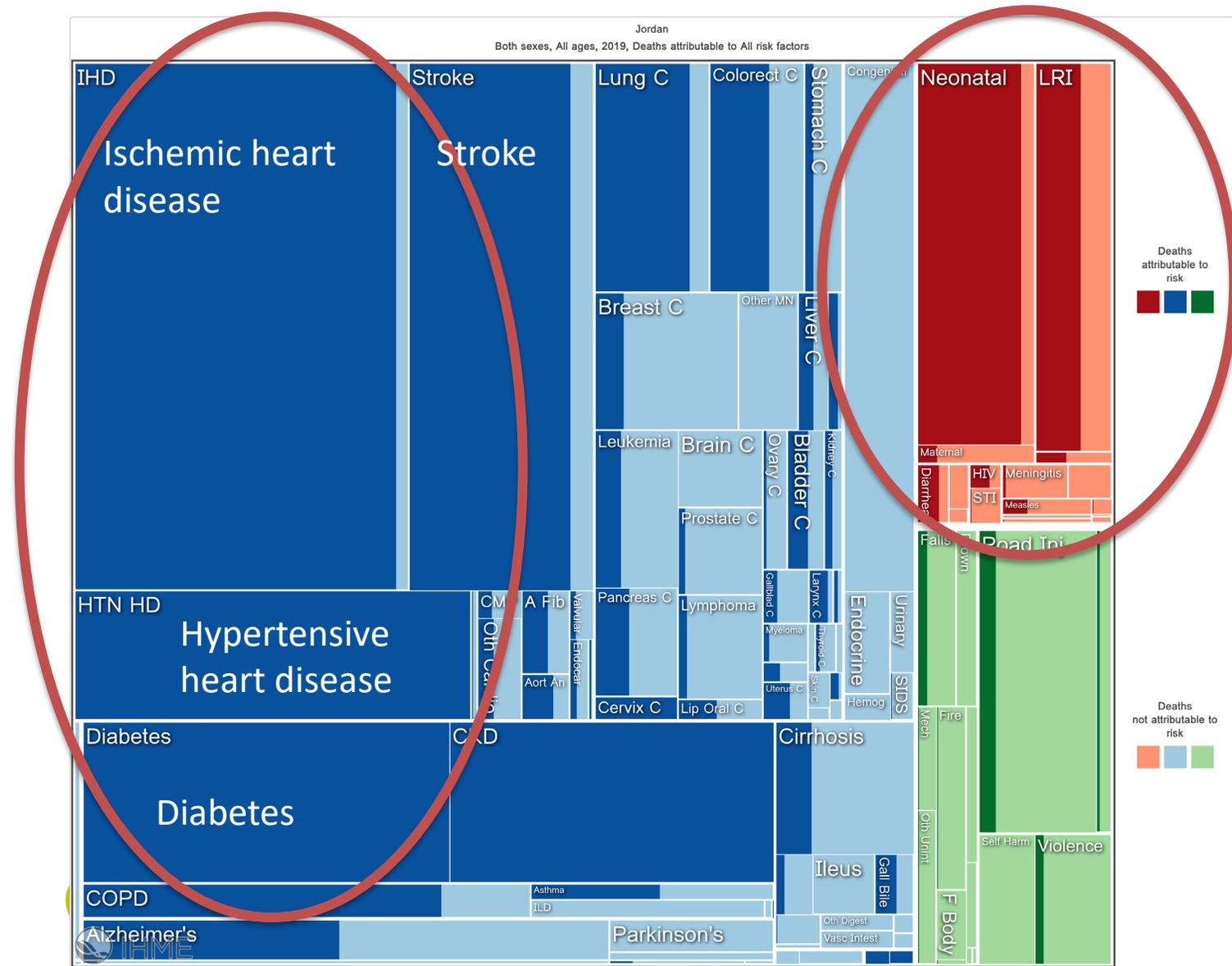
**Six of the top 10 risk factors relate to diet**

## Jordan – 2009-2019



# All risk factors for mortality in Jordan (2019)

- NCDs – many are diet-related
- CDs, maternal and child nutrition
- Injuries

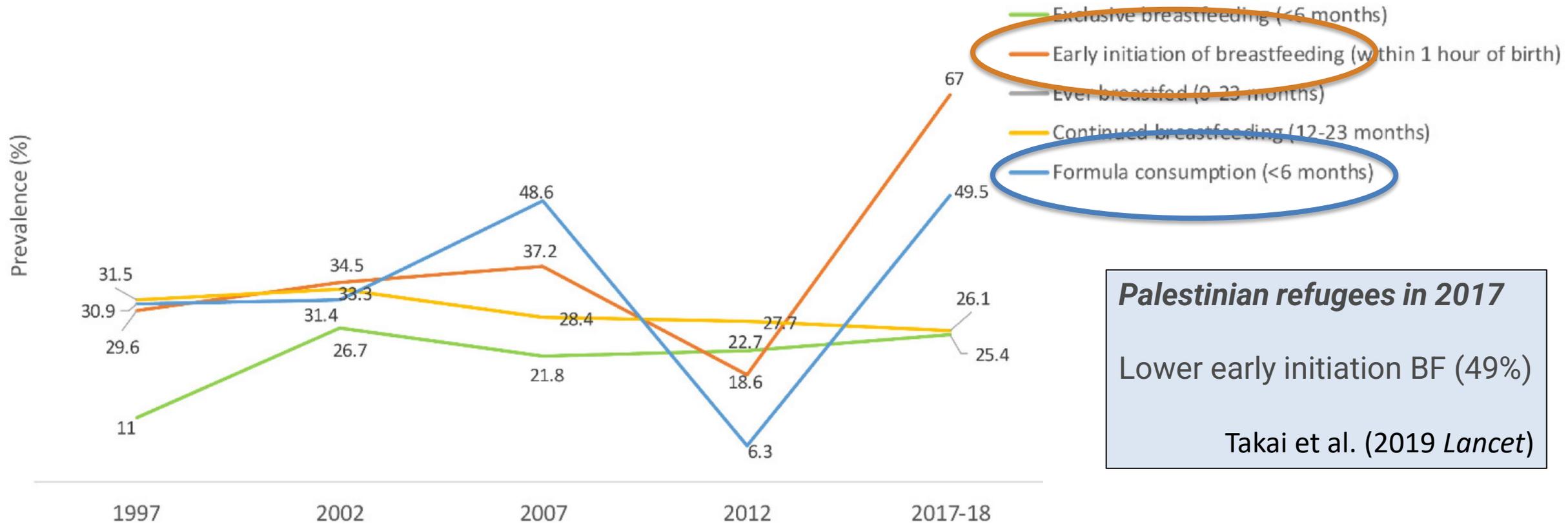


## Jordan is doing *relatively* well on many fronts!

- Well-developed health delivery system (>70% coverage)
- High intake of **fruit and nuts** (closer to % RDA for adults than MENA).
- **Fish** intake higher than the region or globally.
- Lower retail spending on **ultraprocessed foods** than 'West Asia' region or globally in 2018.
- Improving rates of early initiation of **breastfeeding**...

Sources: Global Nutrition Report 2021; FAOStat 2022; IHME 2022

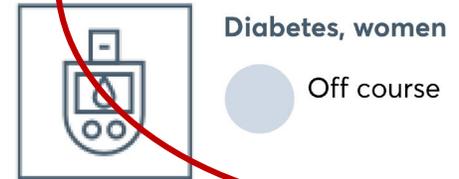
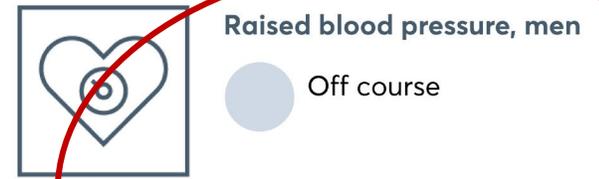
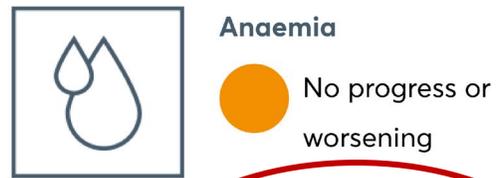
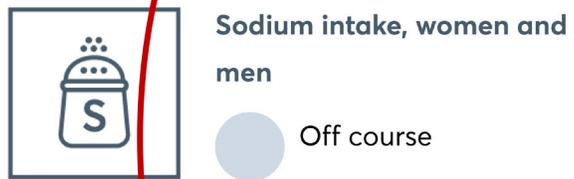
## Trends in IYCF practices in Jordan



**Palestinian refugees in 2017**  
Lower early initiation BF (49%)  
Takai et al. (2019 *Lancet*)

Source: Al-Awwad et al. (2022) in *Nutrients*

# Jordan - Progress towards the global nutrition targets

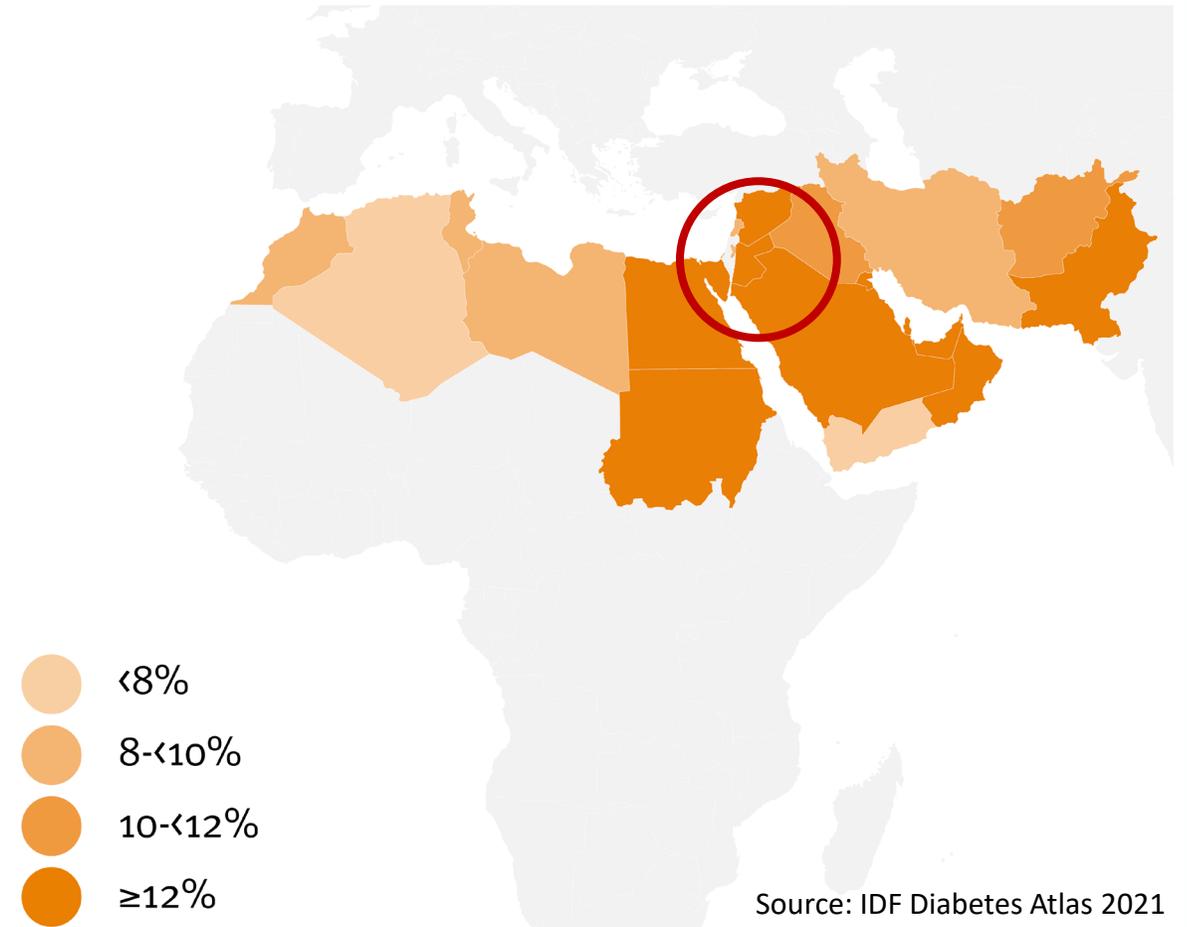


Source: Global Nutrition Report 2021

**Adult diabetes rates in the Middle East/North Africa region are already high**

...and expected to double (across the wider region) by 2045.

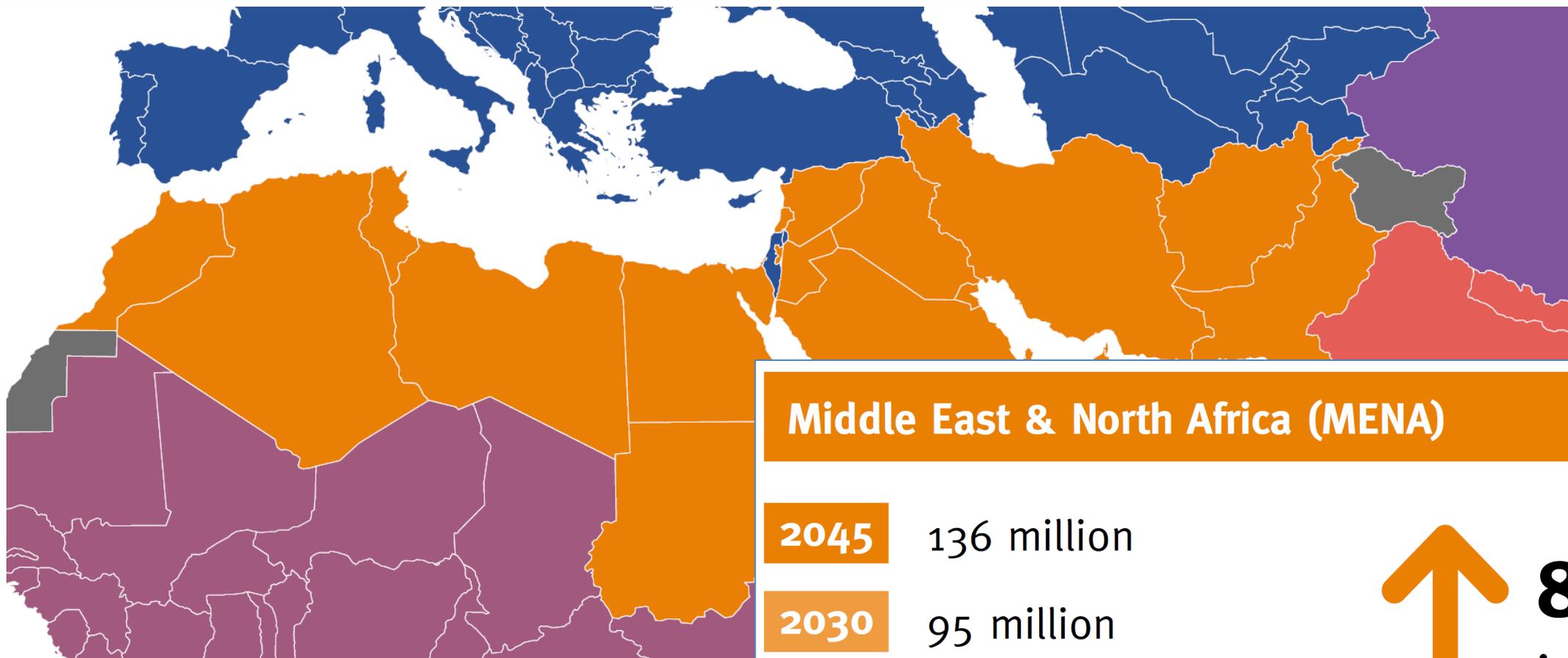
Age-adjusted comparative prevalence (%) of diabetes (20–79 years) in IDF Middle-East and North Africa Region in 2021





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## Middle East & North Africa (MENA)

**2045** 136 million

**2030** 95 million

**2021** 73 million



**87%**  
increase

Source: IDF Diabetes Atlas 2021



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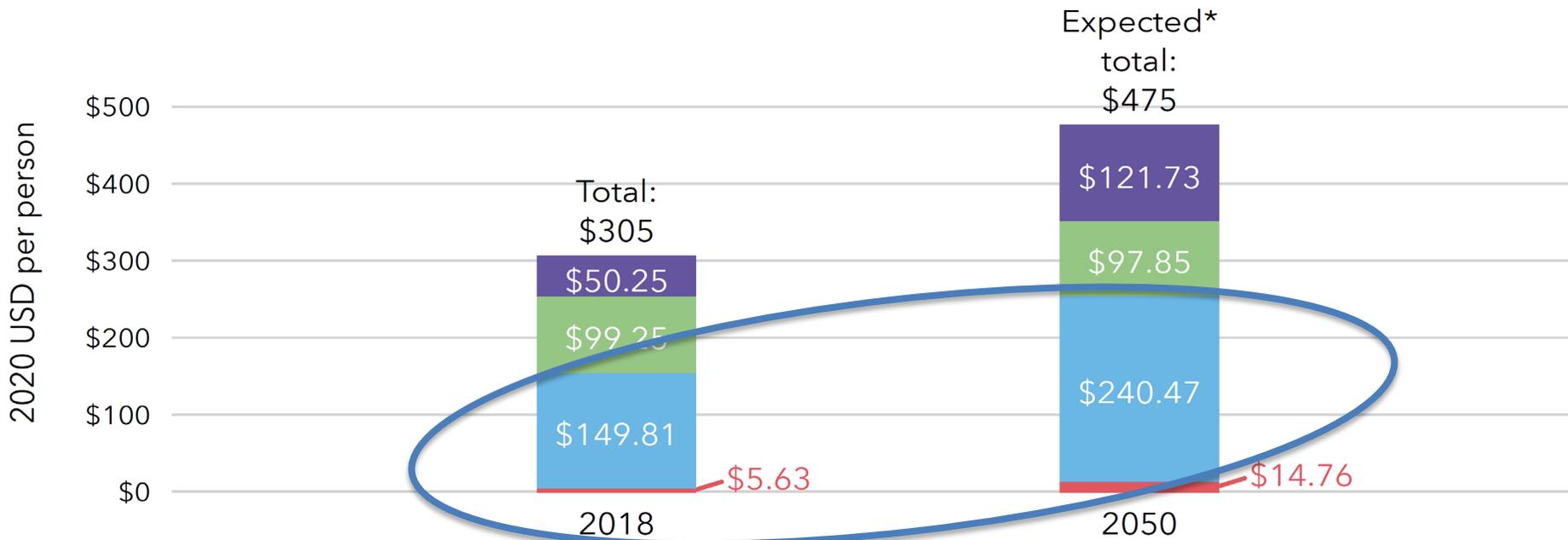
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- Prepaid private spending
- Out-of-pocket spending
- Government health spending
- Development assistance for health

## Jordan health care spending, 2018 - 2050



\*"Expected" is the future growth trajectory based on past growth.

<https://www.healthdata.org/jordan>

[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(21\)01258-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)01258-7)

# Achieving *healthy* diets for all requires coherent multi-sector actions across sectors.

Figure 9.2: Priority policy actions to transition food systems towards sustainable, healthy diets



Source: created by authors



## Estimates of % population *who cannot afford a healthy diet* (SOFI 2022)

	2017	2018	2019	2020
World	42.9	41.5	40.9	42
Middle East & North Africa	38.7	39.5	40.1	38.5
<b>Jordan</b>	15.8	14.9	14.2	14.9
Morocco	18.9	17.5	16.7	16.7
Tunisia	21.8	21.2	20.8	20.3
Sudan	86.3	89.1	92.1	91.8

Source: Updated figures from SOFI 2022, extracted from <https://databank.worldbank.org/CoHD-in-Jordan-/id/49e09e0a#>

## Pro-healthy food subsidies, taxes...

WHO-commissioned systematic review of 54 studies and meta-analysis (2022 in JAMA):

*Subsidizing price of fruits and vegetables:*

“sales increased significantly.”

Taxing ‘unhealthy foods’:

“associated with higher prices and reduced sales.”

[Evaluation of Economic and Health Outcomes Associated With Food Taxes and Subsidies: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis](#) | [Global Health](#)  
[| JAMA Network Open](#) | [JAMA Network](#)

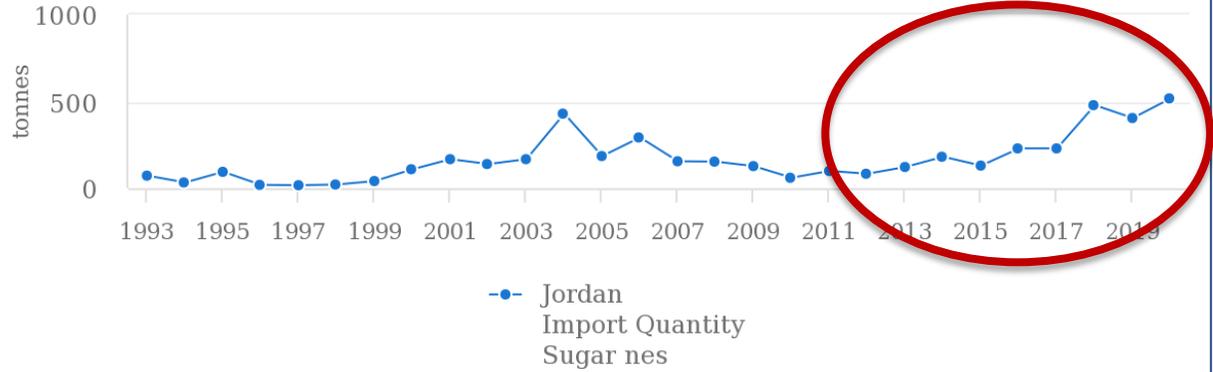
## Rethinking trade policies to support healthier diets



Source: Glopán (2020) Rethinking trade policies to support healthier diets.

## Imports of Sugar nes in Jordan

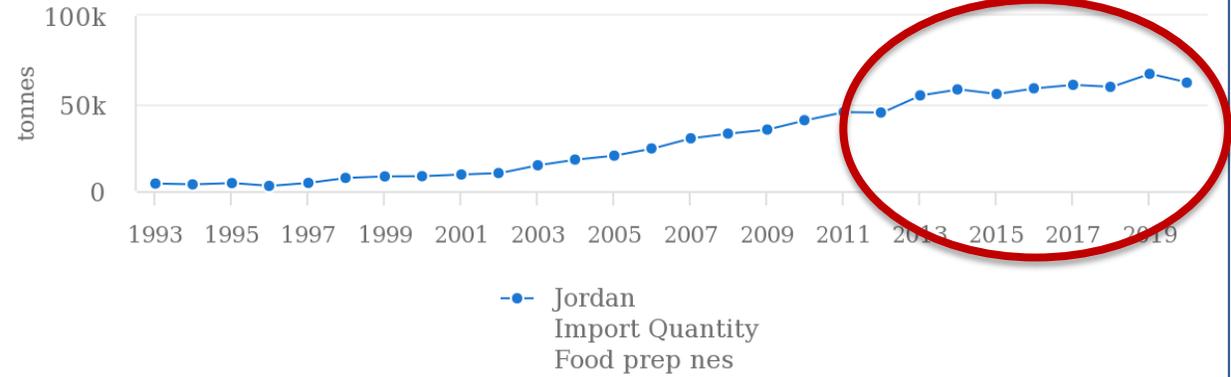
1993 - 2020



Source: FAOSTAT (Aug 15, 2022)

## Imports of Food prep nes in Jordan

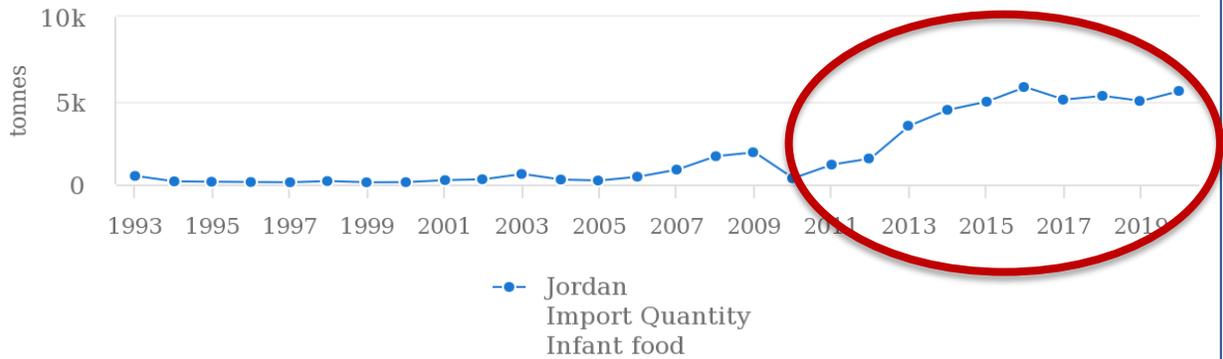
1993 - 2020



Source: FAOSTAT (Aug 15, 2022)

## Imports of Infant food in Jordan

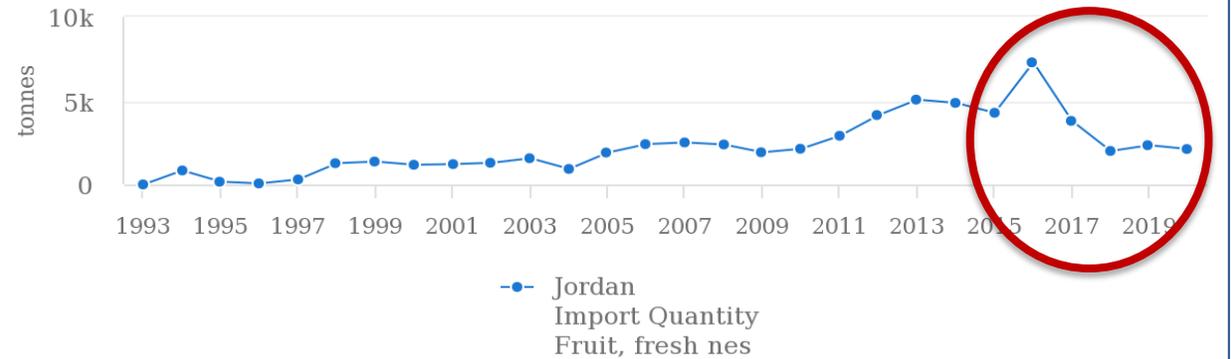
1993 - 2020



Source: FAOSTAT (Aug 15, 2022)

## Imports of Fruit, fresh nes in Jordan

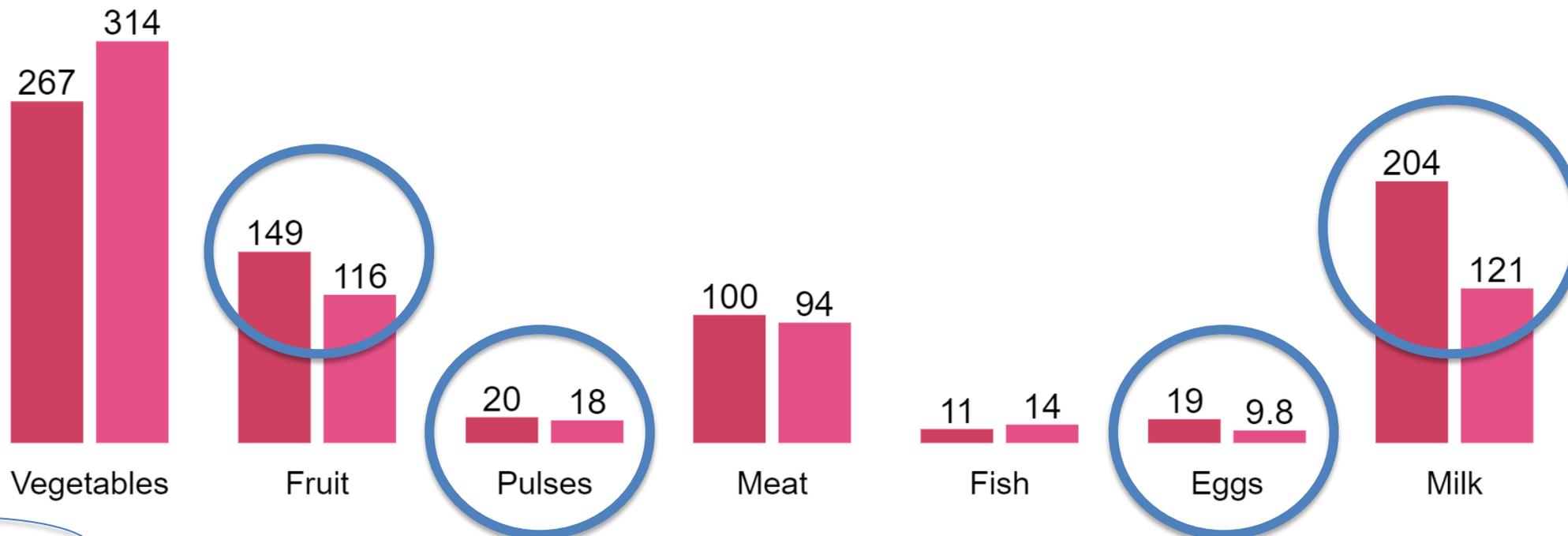
1993 - 2020



Source: FAOSTAT (Aug 15, 2022)



## Supply in Jordan of vegetables, fruit, pulses, meat, fish, eggs and milk (g/person/day)



● 2000 ● 2018

Source: FAOSTAT Food Balance Sheets



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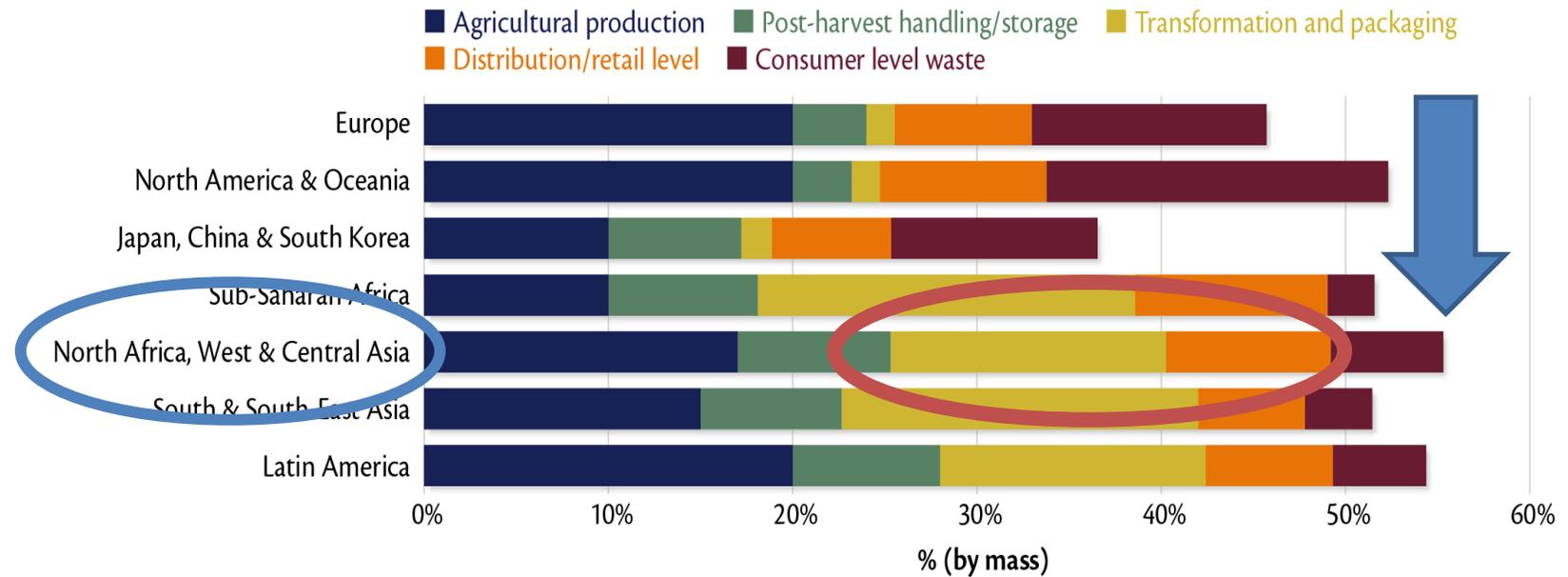


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# Food loss and waste

- FAO estimate that 14% of all food is lost and 6% wasted globally
- The IPCC estimate that 8 - 10% of total anthropogenic GHGs relate to food loss and waste
- 18-41% of vitamins and minerals are lost globally, including 23-33% of vitamin A, folate, calcium, iron and zinc

## Food loss and waste at different stages in the value chain for fruits and vegetables

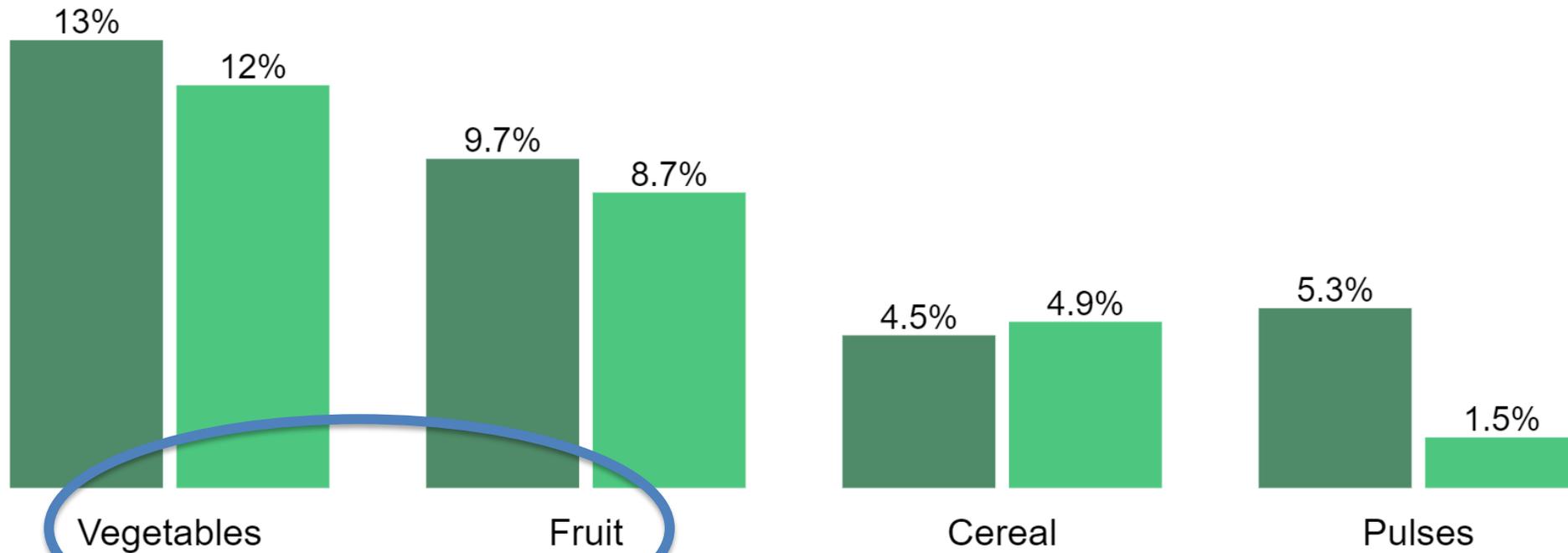


Source: Global Panel (2018)

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## Losses in Jordan of vegetables, fruit, cereals and pulses (% of supply)



● 2000 ● 2018

Source: FAO Food Balance Sheets



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## Food safety should be a nutrition *and* health priority

- Studies in Turkey, Myanmar, Uganda and Vietnam reported that consumers are **afraid to eat fresh fruit and vegetables** due to fear of chemical fertilizers and pesticides used during production.
- Concerns about food adulteration, hygiene of food outlets/vendors, food presentation, perceived freshness of food and family safety concerns led study participants in Benin, Brazil, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico and Turkey **to prefer packaged foods.**

46 studies in 20 middle and low-income countries

Source: Liguori et al. (2022) How do food safety concerns affect consumer behaviors and diets in low and middle-income countries? A systematic review (GFS)



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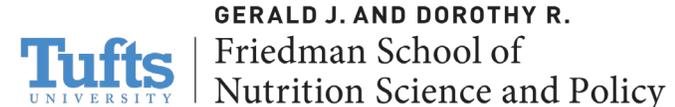
## **Food Systems Summit**

### **Jordan's Pathway to Transforming to Efficient and Sustainable Food Systems by 2030**

More emphasis and support are needed to boost applied research.

Continuously monitor, evaluate, review and adjust. This will include a national mid-term review by end of 2025.

Source: Gov. Jordan (2021) National Pathway document for the UNFSS



## Community Health Nutrition

- **USAID's Community Health and Nutrition Activity** in Jordan aims to improve the nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women and children <2y.
- By improving maternal, infant, and young child nutrition and postpartum family planning behaviors.
- In close collaboration with the Ministry of Health, it (i) supports providers to offer quality **services**, and (ii) **educate** communities on importance of maternal, child, and family **dietary practices**.



<https://www.usaid.gov/jordan/fact-sheets/community-health-and-nutrition>



## CONCLUSIONS

- *Behaviour change is critical* to improved IYCF and health. Starting with exclusive breastfeeding and hygiene, but also *lifelong dietary choices*.
- Guiding choice involves 'dietary guidelines' and 'labels', *but also shifts in economic incentives* that determine price/affordability, and other coherent policy agendas that enhance/protect access to key foods. Health and nutrition professionals have **an important voice to be heard** and a key role to play!
- Today, Jordan is doing quite well in health service coverage and diet composition. So **now is the time to act** to avert deterioration of health. The health system will achieve its own goals better if engaged with other sectors to pursue a *common goal* of universal access to healthy diets.





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[www.feedthefuture.gov](http://www.feedthefuture.gov)



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