With the contribution of around a hundred eminent scientists from throughout the world, François Mariotti has assessed the state of the art in 45 chapters, resorting to Science to address such a complex societal issue in an encyclopaedic manner. In a context of global population growth, particular attention is now being paid to critical transitions in subsistence modes regarding protein and energy from plant or animal sources, in the frame of sustainability. There is a growing interest in diets that are predominantly based on plants, with varied degrees of exclusion of animal products. The topic is burning. The different facets of sustainability must be examined, and this includes the nutritional/health aspect.

What is the relevance of plant-based diet for nutrition and health? According to François Mariotti, «this field is still only addressed in a partial and fragmentary manner, and remains a subject of considerable controversy and clashing views. Science offers a way to overcome this problem. There is now a large body of literature that contains wide-ranging and in-depth information on the relationships between vegetarian or plant-based diets and our health. The aim of this book was therefore to assemble all these data in a single work that could offer a benchmark in the field and also provide an overview of the information available. It therefore discusses both the overall benefits of plant-based diets on health and the disease risk, and issues concerning the status in certain nutrients of the individuals consuming them, while considering the entire spectrum of vegetarian diets.»

A comprehensive benchmark work

The first part of this book was designed to unravel the complex context of this issue. It thus reviews its different aspects so that readers can understand the whole picture. In particular, this first section focuses on the links between our dietary choices in favour of animal or plant sources and individual social and behavioural characteristics, indicating how these may vary as a function of cultures or religions in different parts of the world and how they are articulated in terms of nutrition transitions and other aspects of sustainability. The work then seek to provide a comprehensive view of the relationships between plant-based diets, health and disease prevention by presenting different viewpoints and levels of analysis. First of all, it provides a description of the links between health and certain important characteristics of plant-based diets, with obvious reference to the consumption of both fruits and vegetables and meat. There follow twelve chapters which analyse the relationships between plant-based or vegetarian diets and their numerous consequences with respect to health and disease outcomes. The next section explains how this issue may differ, or be highly specific, in populations of different age or physiological status. The last part of the book comprises eleven chapters which look in detail at the nutrients and substances whose intakes are related to the proportions of plant or animal products in the diet. By focusing at the nutrient/substance level, these chapters echo the section dedicated to the links between broad dietary characteristics and health, thus reflecting the different viewpoints offered by the book.

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To know more about this work