

DISPARITIES IN HOUSEHOLD FOOD AND NUTRIENT INTAKES ACROSS INCOME AND OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

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Background: Results of the 2003 Food Consumption Survey conducted by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute, Department of Science and Technology (FNRI-DOST) revealed inadequate food and nutrient intakes in Filipino households. These inadequacies may be the worst among low-income households. Information is needed on the extent of the gap in food and nutrient intakes across income and occupational groups to help policy makers and program implementors evaluate and plan programs to achieve increased equity in nutrition. **Objective:** To determine the differences in the food and nutrient intakes of Filipino households by household income quartile and household heads' occupational groups. **Methods:** Information on household food consumption and occupation of household heads were taken from the 2003 6th National Nutrition Survey (6NNS). Household income was obtained from the National Statistics Office's (NSO's) 2003 Family Income and Expenditure Survey. The 2003 6NNS adopted the NSO's Master Sample (MS) based on a stratified multi-stage sampling design covering all regions of the country. Household food intake was measured using one-day food weighing. Energy and nutrient adequacies were assessed using the Philippine Food Composition Tables (FCT) and Recommended Energy and Nutrient Intakes (RENI). The households were grouped and compared according to income quartiles and occupation of household heads. A total of 2,754 households were included in the study. All analyses were done using SPSS and STATA programs. **Results:** Households in the lowest income quartile had the least mean per capita food intake (731g/day) of which 50% was contributed by cereals and cereal products. On the other hand, households in the highest income quartile had the largest mean per capita food intake (1,033g/day), 33% of which was contributed by cereal and cereal products. Except for niacin, households belonging to the lowest income quartile did not meet the recommended intake for energy and other nutrients. On the other hand, intakes for energy, protein, vitamin A, and thiamin were adequate in the highest income group. Based on occupational groups, households whose heads are professionals, technicians and associate professionals, clerks, officials of the government and special interest organizations, corporate executives, managers, managing proprietors, and supervisors had the highest mean per capita food and nutrient intakes while households whose heads have no permanent work and income such as trades and related workers had the least intakes (825 g/day). Households whose heads are farmers, forestry workers, and fishermen had the highest consumption of cereal and cereal products, starchy roots and tubers, and vegetables but with lowest intakes of fats and oils, sugars and syrups, and fish, meat, and poultry. On the other hand, households whose heads are professionals, technicians, associate professionals and clerks, officials

of the government, corporate executives, managers, managing proprietors, and supervisors had high intakes of sugars and syrups, fats and oils, eggs, milk and milk products, fruits, and fish, meat, and poultry. **Conclusions/Recommendations:** Mean per capita food and nutrient intakes differed across income and occupational groups, with the poorest having the lowest intakes. The inverse relationship observed between the intake of cereal and cereal products and income suggests a coping action/strategy among the low-income groups to meet energy needs. With this evidence of disparities and inequalities among income and occupational groups, it is recommended that programs for these disadvantaged groups be identified.

