

## Development of dietary scores for assessing nutritional quality of Filipino diet

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### Abstrak

It is well accepted that dietary imbalances inflict a substantial burden of illness on Filipinos. Persistent nutritional problems in the Philippines such as protein-energy malnutrition (PEM) and other nutritional deficiencies greatly affect many infants and young children (Florentino, 1996).

Results of the Philippine Nationwide Nutrition Survey in 1998 revealed various degrees of malnutrition assessed through clinical, anthropometric and biochemical measurements. Iron-deficiency anemia is highly prevalent especially among infants, pregnant and lactating women, and the elderly. The incidence of anemia is 56.6% for infants, 50.3% and 45.7% for pregnant and lactating women, respectively and 49.1% and 39.2% for elderly male and female, respectively. Prevalence rate of anemia for all age groups is 30.6% which is higher than the 1993 rate of 28.9%. Vitamin A deficiency (VAD) is still a public health problem in the country. Vitamin A deficiency among children is widespread throughout the country. The most greatly affected groups by vitamin A deficiency are the children and pregnant women. About 8 out of every 10 children are vitamin A-deficient. About 7 out of every 100 pregnant women are vitamin A .-deficient This prevalence is higher than the 1993 V AD rate of 3 out of every 100 pregnant women.

About one-third of the Filipino population is at risk to iodine deficiency disorders (MD). While the overall prevalence of iodine deficiency in the Philippines is mild, 40% of children have moderate to severe iodine deficiency disorders. About 3 out of every 10 children have moderate to severe iodine deficiency disorders. Over the years, the Filipino diet is composed mainly of rice and fish with some vegetables. Changes in the consumption amounts of these foods and the corresponding nutrient intake of Filipinos have been observed through the years. (Villavieja, 1993).

In the Philippines, the nutrition concern is a matter of national policy. The Philippine Government is committed to ensuring the nutritional adequacy among its population. The history of the recommendation to increase the variety of foods in Filipino diets as means to ensure adequate intake of essential nutrients dates back in the late 40s. This was the first set of dietary guidelines for Filipinos known as the "Basic Six Food Groups" formulated by the then Institute of Nutrition (IN), now the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI). Later, the Basic Six Food Groups was revised into "Your Guide to Good Nutrition" same six groups were re-grouped according to the three basic functions of food in the body, namely: energy-giving foods, body-building foods, and regulating foods.

This guide was essentially the practical translation of the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) in the form of functional groupings of foods together with the recommended amounts designed to supply all the nutrients that the body needs. In 1990, the first Nutritional Guidelines for Filipinos was formulated by a committee spearheaded by FNRL The Nutritional Guidelines was not intended to replace the Guide to Good Nutrition but to offer a broader guideline for nutritional health. For broader guidance on nutrition and health, the FNRI initiated the development of a new food guide " the Philippine Food Guide Pyramid".