ARE FILIPINO HOUSEHOLDS EATING ENOUGH?

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Background: The Food Consumption Survey (FCS), a component of the 6th National Nutrition Survey (NNS), was carried out in 2003 to provide updates on the food and nutrient intakes in Filipino households. In view of the government’s efforts towards promoting and ensuring household food security, the 2003 FCS provides the empirical data on the adequacy of food that is available and consumed in households. The food and nutrient consumption data are used as basis for tracking the progress of and redefining policies and programs that aim to improve the country’s food supply in general, and household diets in particular, towards promoting food security in Filipino households. The data are also used for estimating food threshold and poverty incidence in the country. Method: The 6th NNS adopted the 2003 Master Sample (MS) of the Family Income and Expenditure Survey. The MS was based on a multi-stage stratified sampling design, and covered all regions and all provinces, sampled Primary Sampling Units (PSU), which is defined as contiguous barangays with at least 500 households within provinces, sampled Secondary Sampling Units (SSU) or Enumeration Areas (EA) which consisted of barangays with 150-200 households within the PSUs and sampled households. Specifically, the NNS utilized one of the four replicates of the MS and covered 790 EAs and 5,522 sampled households. The FCS covered a sub-sample (50%) of the sampled households of the 6th NNS. Household food consumption data were collected from one-day household food weighing and interview of household members to get information on foods eaten outside the home. Data processing of the household food intake records, using the Household Dietary Evaluation Software (HDES) of FNRI, included the conversion of food weights to As Purchased (AP) and raw Edible Portion (EP) weights, the estimation of energy and nutrient values for foods consumed, and the computation of food wastage and food cost. Descriptive statistics, including mean per capita food and energy/nutrient intakes, food wastage and peso value of food intake; percent nutrient adequacy; and distribution of food intake by food groups and food sources, were generated using the SPSS v. 10 and Stata v. 7. Results: One-day per capita food intake in Filipino households in 2003 was 886 g and contributed 1905 kilocalories, which represents 98.3% per capita energy adequacy. Cereals and cereal products (41.1%), vegetables (12.5%) and fish (11.7%) contributed the largest share in total household food intake in terms of weight. In terms of nutrient intake, food intake in households contributed 156.4%, 99.2%, 91.4% and 86.3% adequacy for niacin, protein, vitamin A, and thiamin, respectively. The food intake in households was inadequate for calcium (57.1%), iron (60.1%), riboflavin (68.0%), and vitamin C.
(75.0%). Compared with household food consumption in 1993, food intake in Filipino households in 2003 had generally improved. The improvements in the last 10 years were in terms of increased quantity of intake of most of the food groups except fruits, and increased intake of energy and most of the nutrients except iron and vitamin C. **Conclusion/ Recommendations:** The food intake of Filipino households improved in the last 10 years but remained inadequate in essential nutrients particularly, calcium, iron, riboflavin, vitamin C, thiamin, and vitamin A. The declining trend in the consumption of fruits and inadequate intake of vegetables, as well as dried beans, nuts and seeds will have to be addressed, to improve intake of these essential nutrients. Efforts towards wide dissemination of information and training on innovative models for, and mobilizing support for the sustainability of community, school and home food production need to be strengthened.