

## DIETARY INTAKES OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

COLIN BINNS\* and SANDRA VOUYOUCALOS\*\*

A number of reports have stated that migrant groups in Australia may be at risk for nutritional problems<sup>1,2</sup>. In addition, studies of disease in migrant groups has contributed to an understanding of the epidemiology and aetiology of a number of diseases.

Immigrants in Western Australia comprise approximately 28% of the population, the major groups being from the United Kingdom (15% of the population) and Italy (3% of the population). Previous studies of hospital admissions in Western Australia have demonstrated differing prevalences of some diseases between ethnic groups, such as gall-bladder disease, renal calculi and coronary heart disease. The objective of this study was to assess ethnic nutritional differences in Western Australia.

METHOD

From the 1971 census, several suburbs of Perth were selected which contained a high proportion of ethnic groups. A survey population was selected following a door-to-door census in these areas. The ethnic groups selected were of comparable socio-economic status.

Dietary record forms printed in several languages were distributed and collected by an interviewer who reviewed the forms for completeness. The diets were analysed using the NUTS program developed at the Western Australian Institute of Technology.

RESULTS

A total of 546 dietary records was studied from the following groups :

Australian	119
Italian	94
English	70
English/Australian	69
Italian/Australian	22
Other	172

The analysis revealed differences in nutrient intake related to ethnic groups. All groups had relatively high fat intakes with an average of 43% of energy derived from fat. Nutrients most likely to be below the Recommended Dietary Allowances were calcium, iron and thiamine.

REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> Owles E "A comparative Study of Nutrient Intakes of Migrant and Australian Children in WA" *Med J Aust* (1975) V2 P130
- <sup>2</sup> Gracey M "Nutritional Problems in the Australian Community" *Med J Aust* (1978) V1 P202

---

\* School of Health Sciences, Western Australian Institute of Technology  
 \*\* Department of Medicine, University of Western Australia