

DIETARY ADEQUACY AMONGST YOUNG MOTHERS IN A WESTERN SYDNEY SUBURB

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It has been suggested that the diet of women of child bearing age may be inadequate, particularly in areas that are socially deprived. To test this hypothesis, the food habits and dietary adequacy of 173 women in the Baulkham Hills areas of Sydney were studied as part of a larger Family Care Study (King and Wyllie, 1980). Dwellings were chosen at random, based on 1976 Census data and only families with at least one child, under 10 years, were studied.

Dietary intakes of the mothers were obtained by 24 hour recall. Vitamin and mineral usage and atypical eating patterns were determined by an additional questionnaire. Of 188 records, 173 were used, as five lacked sufficient information and eight women were pregnant or breast feeding.

TABLE 1. Percentage distribution of nutrients as percentages of recommended dietary allowances#

Nutrient	%≤67%RDA	%>67≤100%RDA	%>100≤200%RDA	%>200%RDA
Protein(g)	9	18	69	4
Energy(kJ)	18	49	33	1
Calcium(mg)	10	8	47	35
Iron(mg)	24	44	31	1
Retinol(mcg)	16	17	46	21
Thiamin(mg)	4	28	54	14
Riboflavin(mg)	2	8	57	34
Niacin(mg)	12	27	44	17
Vitamin C(mg)	11	8	24	57

#Recommended Dietary Allowances, Australia - women 18-35 yrs.

A significant percentage of women had low intakes of iron and energy. Thiamin, riboflavin and niacin intakes were adequate or high; thirty four percent of riboflavin intakes were greater than 200% RDA. Protein, calcium and vitamin C intakes were high and retinol intakes covered a large range. Only 15% of women were regular users of vitamin/mineral supplements, so high vitamin and mineral intakes could not be explained solely by supplementation. Alcohol was consumed by 31% of the group, intakes ranging from 1.6% to 23% of energy.

The low iron intakes confirm the results of studies in the USA (HANES, 1971-72). Although the mean energy intake (7768 kJ) of this group is below the RDA for Australian women (8400 kJ), iron appears to be the only nutrient significantly affected.

KING, R.J.R., WYLLIE, A.G.J. (1980). Bulletin No. 2, Community Research Centre, University of Sydney.

Preliminary findings of the First Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, United States, 1971-1972: Dietary Intake and Biochemical Findings, DHEW Publication No. (HRA) 74-1219-1, 1974.

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