Background: In Australia, there is a scarcity of data related to the nutrient intakes and health of migrant children from developing countries.

Objective: To determine food, energy and nutrient intakes of 3-to-12-year-old children from various sub-Saharan African (SSA) sub-populations living in Melbourne.

Design: Subjects were recruited, using a snowball sampling technique. Data were collected by questionnaire-assisted interview with a parent using bi-lingual interviewers. Dietary data was collected using a previously validated “photo-assisted food frequency questionnaire” methodology. Each child was weighted and measured. Energy and nutrient intakes were determined using Food Works ®

Results: Data was obtained on 337 children who migrated to Australia either as refugees or migrants. These 3-to-12-year-old SSA children exhibited post-migration dietary intakes that were higher than data for Australian children in the same age bracket (NNS95). The daily food intake averaged 3184g (95%CI: 3058-3311g). The energy, total fat and saturated fat intakes averaged respectively 13.7MJ (95%CI: 13.2-14.3MJ), 128g (95%CI: 122-134g) and 51g (95%CI: 49.4-54.4g). The proportion of energy derived from fats averaged 34.6% (95%CI: 34.1-35.2%) for total fat and 14% (95%CI: 13.8-14.3%) for saturated fat. 27% percent of the children were obese or overweight.

Conclusion: The evaluation of the post-migration diet of SSA refugee and migrant children may indicate high energy and fat intakes. This would be consistent with high level of obesity in this sample. It is also possible that this population may over-report intake. More research is required into weight gain in this population.