

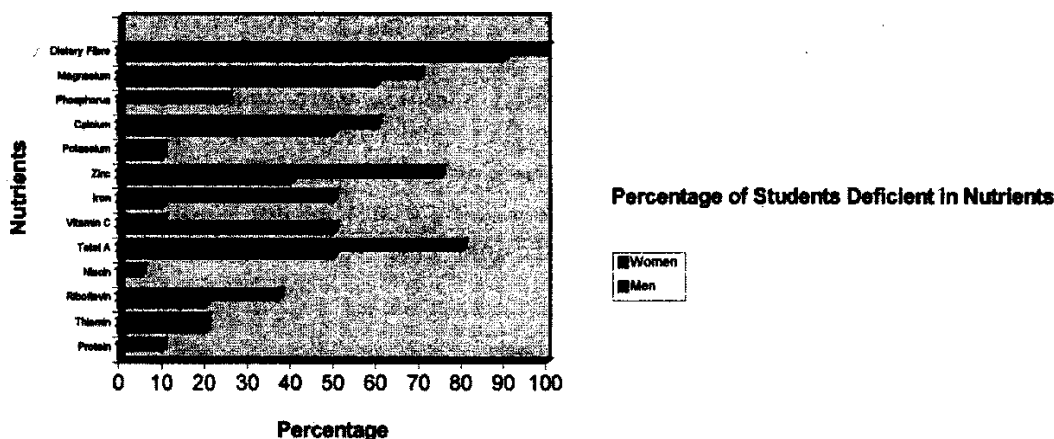
**Dietary evaluation of full time students at Griffith University, Gold Coast.**

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Due to a combination of financial hardship and hectic lifestyle, students often complain that their diet is inadequate. To determine the accuracy of this claim, we have investigated the dietary status of students at Griffith University, Gold Coast.

Thirty students (10 male, 20 female, age 17-35, BMI 17-40) were obtained randomly from the 1997 enrolment of students. These students ( 1% of campus enrolments ) completed a seven day dietary diary and questionnaires about their knowledge and attitude towards health and nutrition. The information from the seven day dietary diary was entered into the computer program *Diet 1* which tabulated the level of nutrients in each diet.



A large proportion of the student population was found to be below the RDI in nutrients (Fig ). A greater proportion of women were deficient in nutrients. The students' diets were compared with the CSIRO nutritional survey 1993<sup>1</sup>. The student averages were consistently lower than the Australian averages for the majority of the nutrients. Most female students were deficient in vitamin A, zinc, calcium and dietary fibre, whereas most men were deficient in vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and magnesium. During the seven days recorded, 65% of women and 50% of men ate no seafood. Only 5% of females and 20% of males ate at least one serving of fruit or vegetables everyday. Women were below the Australian average in 88% of nutrients. Men were below the Australian average in 31% of nutrients. During the interviews students performed poorly at identifying their nutritional deficiencies. For example 43% of students incorrectly identified whether they had sufficient or too little calcium in their diet. This study suggests that the majority of students at Griffith University, Gold Coast have inadequate diets particularly with respect to vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, zinc, magnesium and dietary fibre.

<sup>1</sup>Bafhurst, K., Record, S., Syrette, J., Powis, G. (1996) *Does Five Years Make a Difference: Results from the CSIRO Australian food and Nutrition surveys 1988 and 1993*. CSIRO: Adelaide