

The Mexican Database And Its Use In The CRSP Project

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The sociocultural, economic, and biological characteristics of food consumption are substantially different in rural, developing populations as compared to urban or industrialized ones. Therefore, the measurement of food and nutrient intake is also substantially different in character. Issues include core foods, meal structure, food preparation, water content of cooked foods, and bioavailability issues. This paper discusses the nature of eating in six communities in rural Mexico and those methods employed by the Mexico Nutrition CRSP to measure and analyze individual intakes of food and nutrients. The Mexico Nutrition CRSP, and its sister projects in Kenya and Egypt, were large prospective studies of the effect of food intake on human function (USAID Grants DAN 1309-A-00-9090-00 and DAN 1309-SS-1070-00). Mexico CRSP personnel collected prospective dietary data using a combination of food record, food weighing, and recall. Intake of *tortillas*, which usually provide between 50 and 70% of dietary energy, was measured by using a combination of food record and food weighing. Most other foods were consumed in the form of recipes that were composed of several foods. Nutrient intakes were calculated using a modified version of the INNSZ (National Nutrition Institute of Mexico) nutrient database. This database contained information on 458 foods and their estimated content for 14 nutrients plus phytate and fiber. Because of extremely high intakes of fiber and phytate (from *tortillas*), issues of bioavailability were found to be of central importance in effecting several human functions, including growth and cognitive performance.