

Recipe Information Obtained During Dietary Survey Interviews: The NHANES III Experience

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During the Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES III), 24-hour dietary recalls are obtained using an automated interview and coding system administered by trained dietary interviewers. The interview system, known as the

NHANES III Dietary Data Collection System or "DDC system", was developed at the University of Minnesota's Nutrition Coordinating Center with Government contract and grant support. The DDC system was described and demonstrated at previous Databank Conferences. This session focuses on the challenges of coding noncommercial recipe foods reported in NHANES III.

When noncommercial foods are reported which cannot be entered into the System at the time of the interview, the dietary interviewers note the description provided by the respondent using the DDC's "Missing Food" screen feature. Information about ingredients, including fat and salt, preparation methods, and amounts of food consumed are recorded. NCHS staff receive hard copy versions Missing Food reports biweekly. During the first half of the Survey, NCHS staff reviewed hundreds of Missing Foods reports. Many new commercial foods were reported as Missing Foods. Noncommercial mixtures, particularly, homemade dishes, modified recipes and ethnic foods are challenging to code.

Several types of noncommercial mixtures have been reported including, desserts made with egg substitutes in lieu of whole eggs, meatloaf prepared with game meats, cornbread prepared with little or no fat, and Mexican American style soups, caldos, and stews. The options used to code new foods reported during the Survey include:

1. Adding new USDA Survey Nutrient Data Base food codes
2. Coding the food using an existing USDA code
3. Partitioning the food using existing food codes
4. Entering the food by individual components

The process used to guide the coding effort requires input from the dietary interviewers, USDA survey data base staff, and NCC. NCHS recognized that recipe mixtures are a challenge for researchers working with dietary data.

Last year, Amy Green, formerly of NCHS, organized a workshop to review approaches for coding recipe mixtures. Grace Petot of Case Western Reserve University chaired the workshop. NCHS provided the workshop participants with examples of recipes which were reported in the Survey. This afternoon, Grace will describe the charge given to the Workshop participants.