Feeding Our Future: The Role of Nutrition Research in Updating Child Nutrition Programs

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February 25, 2010
NC-FAR Lunch N Learn Seminar
Washington, DC
REVISIONS AND IMPROVEMENT TO CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

NUTRITION RESEARCH
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REVIEW AND SYNTHESIS

NUTRITION RESEARCH
Synthesis of research is essential

- Dietary Guidelines for Americans (revised every 5 years; USDA/HHS): all federal programs MUST follow the DGs.
- MyPyramid (revised in response to DG and DRI s; USDA)
- Dietary Reference Intakes (need to be regularly revised; IOM)
Nutrition programs Use MyPyramid for food targets
Nutrition programs use DRIs for nutrient targets
Research has informed the IOM’s Recent Reviews of Child Nutrition Programs

- Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- National School Breakfast and Lunch (NSBP, SLP)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
Many types of nutrition research help improve child nutrition programs

- **Epidemiology of diet and disease**
WIC and School Meals require increases in whole grain foods

DG recommends half of all grains should be whole

NUTRITION RESEARCH: Whole grain intake reduces risk of chronic diseases
School Meals must eliminate all commercial foods with more than 0 g trans FA

DG and DRIs recommend eliminating trans FA

NUTRITION RESEARCH: Trans fatty acids increase risk of heart disease
What types of “nutrition research” help improve child nutrition programs?

- Epidemiology of diet and disease
- **Nutrient requirements of mothers and children**
Dietary Reference Intakes

• DRI s are the nutrient intake standards for the US
• Based on nutrient requirements by age and gender groups
• Research base is often incomplete, especially for children
What types of “nutrition research” help improve child nutrition programs?

- Epidemiology of diet and disease
- Nutrient requirements of mothers and children
- **Nutrition surveys to identify deficiencies and excesses**
- Food composition data to support surveys
Prevalence of inadequate intakes of vitamin A among WIC age groups (WWEIA/USDA)
Vitamin A (mcg RAE/d) in old and new WIC food package VI (post-partum women)
Benefit – Decreased prevalence of inadequate vitamin A intakes for post-partum women
Institute of Medicine’s Review Process

- Convene committee of experts; ensure no bias or conflicts
- Compile all published research
- Collect data from national surveys
- Use DRI s to evaluate intakes
- Write a consensus report with references (NOT opinions)
- Extensive peer review process
Timeline for the IOM WIC Report

**Project Initiation**

**PRELIMINARY REPORT**

- Final report delivered in pre-publication

**Study Period**

- Mtg 1
- Mtg 2
- Mtg 3
- Mtg 4
- Mtg 5
- Mtg 6

**Meeting Reports**

- Mtg 1
- Mtg 2
- Mtg 3
- Mtg 4
- Mtg 5
- Mtg 6

**Final Report**

- Research, Meet, Deliberate
  - Plan, organize and hold Public Workshop
  - Detailed research
  - Develop draft outline and frame report
  - Develop draft report
  - Develop consensus on conclusions and recommendations

**Production**

- Final report delivered in pre-publication

**Meeting Reports**
WIC FOOD PACKAGES
TIME FOR A CHANGE

INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE
OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

Released
April 2005
Example: WIC recommendations for fruits and vegetables

- Research shows that F/V intake associated with reduced obesity and chronic diseases
- Revised WIC: Every participant over 6 months of age to get fruits and vegetables:
  - Babies: jarred baby food fruit/veg
  - Children: cash-value vouchers for $8/month
  - Women: cash-value vouchers for $10/month
Process of implementing the IOM’s WIC recommendations

- Committee’s recommendations go to USDA/Food and Nutrition Service
- Posted (with very few revisions) in the Federal Register
- All responses reviewed by FNS
- Final rules posted and then become regulations.
The IOM’s WIC recommendations are now federal regulations

- Effective September, 2009
- Many states started sooner
- Signs posted in supermarkets saying, “WIC fruit and vegetable vouchers taken here”
School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children
School Meals Recommendations

- Released October, 2009
- Increased fruits and vegetables in meals
- Increased whole grains
- Limited fat in dairy products
- No trans fat in commercial foods
- Specified maximum calorie levels
Example: Balancing food security and obesity prevention

- Provide sufficient but not excessive calories (set minimum and maximum calorie levels)
- Ensure that the foods are nutrient dense (high in nutrients but low in calories)
- Provide foods that are NOT calorie dense (by limiting fats and sugars)
CACFP Process

- Child and Adult Care Food Programs
  - Children in day care
  - Children in after-school care
  - Disabled adults
  - Older adults
  - Emergency feeding
- Currently being reviewed by an IOM Committee
How is the impact assessed?

- Period evaluations are essential
- For example, the School Nutrition Dietary Surveys conducted by the Food and Nutrition Service
- Something similar would be desirable for WIC and CACFP
What types of nutrition research help improve child nutrition programs?

- Epidemiology of diet and disease
- Nutrient requirements of children
- Nutrition surveys to identify deficiencies and excesses
- Food composition data to support surveys
- **Evaluations of food programs**
NUTRITION RESEARCH IS A BROAD UMBRELLA
How visible are these programs to the public?

- Virtually everyone who grew up in the US knows about school meals (and has an opinion about their quality). 30 million children fed each day.
- Half of all babies born in the US receive WIC
- Child care is utilized by a growing percentage of working families
People know these programs and are passionate about them!

- USDA/FNS received 44,000 written comments when the WIC revisions were posted in the Federal Register
Nutrition Research is the Key to Improving Their Effectiveness
For more information

- IOM reports:  [www.nap.edu](http://www.nap.edu)


- MyPyramid: [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)