

## NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF FILIPINOS IN 2011

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### Background:

As the country's premier research and development institute in food and nutrition, and in fulfillment of its mission to provide accurate and timely data, the Food and Nutrition Research Institute undertook the fifth of the series of Updating Surveys from June to December, 2011. The Updating Survey continues to provide critical data on nutritional status of the Filipinos for use in decision-making of the government, private sectors, and other organizations. Results are also used to track the country's progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in curbing extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. Moreover, it provides vital information on proper targeting of who are the at-risk group.

### Objective:

To provide new data on the nutritional status of the Filipino children, adolescents, and adults, including pregnant women and lactating mothers.

### Methods:

The 2011 Updating Survey adopted the 2003 Master Sample (MS) of the National Statistics Office and utilized the household list of the 2004 Labor Force Survey. The MS was based on a multi-stage stratified sampling design covering all regions and provinces, with Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) as the contiguous barangays with at least 500 households within provinces and Secondary Sampling Units or Enumeration Areas as the contiguous area in a barangay within PSUs. The ultimate sampling unit is the households. Specifically, the four replicates of the MS were utilized to come up with provincial estimates and covered 3,136 Enumeration Areas and 38,894 sample households. All members in the sample households (198,022) were included. Weight, height, and recumbent length (for children < 2 years of age), and waist and hip circumferences were measured using calibrated instruments. Nutritional status was assessed using the International Reference Standards for all groups except for pregnant women, which used Philippine reference as criteria. Descriptive statistics were generated using the SPSS v.9 and Stata v.7.

### Results:

The problem of undernutrition among Filipinos, including pregnant and lactating mothers remained unchanged for nearly two decades. Among children, 0 to 5 years old, the prevalence of stunting (33.6%) and underweight (20.2%) was at a high level while the current nutritional status (7.3%) was poor based on the WHO cut-off points of worldwide prevalence. For children >5 to 10 years old, stunting and underweight remained at high to very high levels. Overweight among 0-10 years old, is gradually increasing over the years from 2003 to 2011. Among adolescents, >10 to 19 years old, stunting prevalence was 35.7%, and remained unchanged since 2003. Among adults, 20 years old and above, the prevalence of chronic energy deficiency was lower by more than 50% compared with the prevalence of overweight and obese. The prevalence of overweight and obese adults is continuously increasing while undernourished adults are declining since 1993. Obesity based on high waist circumference and waist-hip ratio is more pronounced among females than males. For pregnant women, 25% were at-risk of delivering low birth weight babies especially among teen pregnant women. Among lactating mothers, overweight was more of a problem than underweight especially among adult lactating mothers.

### Conclusion:

The problem of undernutrition co-existing with overnutrition in the Filipino population is still persistent and unabated across age and physiological groups.

### Recommendation:

Intensify efforts to curb long standing undernutrition particularly in the first two years of life to prevent risk to delayed mental development, poor school performance, and reduced intellectual capacity. Nutrition plans and programs should also be area-specific and problem-based, targeting the most nutritionally vulnerable groups of children and pregnant teen mothers. Overnutrition can be arrested by intensifying wellness programs in school and in the workplace, as well as, integrating them in the public health system to prevent both short-term and long-term health consequences to non-communicable diseases.