HOW FOOD SECURE ARE FILIPINO HOUSEHOLDS? TRENDS FROM THE NATIONAL NUTRITION SURVEY DATA, 2001 TO 2015

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BACKGROUND
Achieving food security is at the core of the post-2015 development agenda. The adoption of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations with major target seeking to end hunger, achieve food and nutrition security, and promote sustainable agriculture implies the need for an empirical data to track progress towards achieving this goal in 2030.

OBJECTIVE
The study aimed to describe the food security status of Filipino households from 2001 to 2015 and evaluate trend over time.

METHODOLOGY
Secondary data from Food Security Survey component of the National Nutrition Surveys (NNS) and Updating of the Nutritional Status of Filipino Children and Other Population Groups Surveys of the Department of Science and Technology’s Food and Nutrition Research Institute (DOST-FNRI) were utilized for this study. Face-to-face interviews among meal planners using experienced-based scale measures such as Radimer-Cornell (2001 to 2008) and United States Agency for International Development’s (USAID’s) Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) in 2013 and 2015 were employed.

RESULTS
The proportion of food-insecure households decreased from 84.4 percent in 2001, to 77.0 percent in 2003, to 72.7 percent in 2008, to 69.3 percent in 2011, to 65.9 percent in 2013 at an average rate of reduction of 4.6 percent while there was a slight increase to 66.1 percent in 2015. The characteristics of households observed to be more food-insecure in 2015 were those located in rural (74.9 percent) areas (vs urban rate of 57.1 percent), among households who belonged to the poorest wealth quintile (88.5 percent) and those with members considered vulnerable, such as those with 0-5 year old children (74.2 percent), pregnant women (76.6 percent), and lactating mothers (80.1 percent).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
The findings showed that majority, about two-thirds, of Filipino households are food insecure. The inequities between the richest and poorest households, rural and urban areas, and those households with vulnerable members are also highlighted in the results. Policies and interventions must be directed towards the nutritionally at-risk groups identified in this study. Locally-focused food security programs must also be strengthened.