SOCIO-ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY AND DIETARY DIVERSITY OF WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS

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Background:
Women of reproductive age (WRA) often suffer the most negative consequences of food insecurity. Ironically, food insecurity is more observed in rural areas where most food is being produced.

Objectives:
This study determined factors affecting household food security and dietary diversity of women in rural areas.

Materials and Methods:
Secondary data of about 4,002 WRA, 15-49 years old, obtained from the 2015 Updating Survey of the Nutritional Status of Filipino Children and Other Population Groups of the Department of Science and Technology- Food and Nutrition Research Institute (DOST-FNRI) was analyzed. Indicators and proxy measures of food security were categorized under its three pillars- food availability, accessibility and utilization. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were utilized for the data analysis using Stata version 15.0.

Results and Findings:
Women in rural areas who are more likely to be food secure are those with tertiary and above education (AOR=2.86, CI 1.09 to 7.54, p=0.03). Women in the richest wealth quintile are 30 times more likely to be food secure than those in the poorest wealth quintile. Those who are more likely to meet minimum dietary diversity score (DDS) are women with at least tertiary education (AOR=2.13, CI 0.96 to 4.72, p=0.06). Women in the richest wealth quintile are 3 times more likely to meet the minimum DDS than those in the poorest wealth quintile. Access to media or ownership of radio or television also increases likelihood to meeting the DDS (AOR=1.32, CI 1.07 to 1.62, p=0.01).

Conclusion and Recommendations:
With food insecurity persisting as a key public health problem in the Philippines particularly in rural areas, findings of the study revealed different factors associated with it and meeting dietary diversity but wealth and literacy were the two evident determinants to both. Hence, policies and programs should be focused to improving economic opportunities to women and enhancing their knowledge on meeting dietary diversity using resources available in rural areas.