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Subject: Women's Dietary Diversity Indicator  
Posted by [mdeitchl](#) on Tue, 01 Apr 2014 22:42:29 GMT  
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The USAID funded Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance III Project (FANTA) would like to highlight the need for an indicator of women's dietary diversity to be collected by and reported in the DHS.

1. Why is the information needed:

The quality of the diet of women of reproductive age is a key nutrition issue, which has important implications for the health and well-being of women of reproductive age; and, which, among pregnant and lactating women has important consequences for the health, nutrition and development of infants and young children. The quality of women's diet is thus an important feature of global efforts to address optimal health and nutrition during the first 1000 days.

2.a. What questions will elicit this information:

To collect an indicator of women's dietary diversity would require questions similar to those required for collecting the dietary diversity indicator for children. This would require only asking a short set of questions related to women's food group consumption in the past 24 hours. These questions could be collected by adding an additional column to questions 558i-558u so that there would be an area to record the 24 hour food group recall data for the mother of the child under 24 months in addition to the food group recall data that is already being collected for her child under 24 months.

It would be recommended to add a few more food groups to the set of questions currently listed in this 24 hour food group recall section of the questionnaire, such as: "condiments for flavor, such as chilies, spices, herbs, or fish powder", "grubs, snails or insects", "foods made with red palm oil, red palm nut, or red palm nut pulp sauce". In addition, we recommend disaggregating question 558g into "beans and peas" and "nuts and seeds"; question 558i into "grains and grain products" and "all other starchy staples"; and question 558n into "other fruits" and "other vegetables" to better capture data for the women's dietary diversity indicator.

2.b. Validation of the indicator:

There has been a substantial amount of research undertaken to help develop and validate an indicator of women's dietary diversity. From 2005-2010, FANTA, with funding from USAID, undertook, in collaboration with IFPRI and a number of other institutions, a multi-year research initiative to develop and validate a simple indicator to reflect the micronutrient adequacy of women's diets.

As a result of this research, several large USAID funded programs, such as Feed the Future and the Title II Development Food Assistance Programs, adopted a women's dietary diversity indicator in their M&E results frameworks. The women's dietary diversity indicator is now collected in the baseline/final evaluations for these programs.

More recently, FAO has funded a follow-on validation research initiative in an effort to further

explore and strengthen the evidence for the validity of such a simple indicator of women's diets. This work is in its last stages of completion and the results will help to inform how best to tabulate (ie. the most appropriate cut-off to use for) an indicator women's dietary diversity.

3. How will the resulting information be used:

Collection of a women's dietary diversity indicator in the DHS would not only help to further advocate for the importance of the quality of women's diets, but would also provide a means for tracking and monitoring progress across countries in improving the quality of women's diets. In addition, given that the women's dietary diversity indicator is now collected in the baseline/final evaluations for the USAID Feed the Future and Title II Development Food Assistance Programs, national level tracking information such as that which could be provided by inclusion of the indicator in the DHS could be very beneficial for these USAID programs in way of secondary data.

4. What is the priority of the suggested additions compared with what is already in the questionnaire:

The addition of questions on women's dietary diversity will not obviate the needs for other questions that are currently included in the questionnaire, as no questions on women's dietary diversity are currently included in the questionnaire. However, there are other questions in the nutrition section (not related to women's dietary diversity), which we would suggest could be deleted (see DELETIONS below).

5. If suggesting more than one addition, what is the priority among the suggested additions:

N/A

6. Should the additional data be collected in all countries:

Yes, information on women's dietary diversity should be collected in all countries to support global advocacy, monitoring and tracking information related to women's nutrition issues.

DELETIONS: Q446 "In the first two months after delivery, did you receive a Vitamin A dose like (this/any of these)?"

1. Why can this information be removed:

Post-partum Vitamin A supplementation for women is no longer recommended by the World Health Organization.