
Subject: Re: Women's Dietary Diversity Indicator
Posted by [marimond](#) on Thu, 03 Apr 2014 15:46:13 GMT

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We are writing to strongly support the proposals put forward by PAHO/WHO and HKI, and by the FANTA Project.

Previous rounds of the DHS have provided critical information on infant diet quality; in the context of urbanization and rapid nutrition transition throughout the developing world, the additional response options on infant/young child consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and energy-dense, nutrient poor snacks are urgently needed to provide information for global tracking and to inform national programs.

PAHO/WHO/HKI have provided specific and field-tested options. We suggest a modification to one of their specific proposals, to expand the wording of the proposed question for soda to include all sugar-sweetened beverages. Precise wording would benefit from a continued consultation process prior to finalization of the new DHS core questionnaire, but it could be along the lines of:

- "Any sweet drinks, such as juice drinks, tea with sugar, or soft drinks/soda/fizzy drinks?"

In many areas, "juice drinks" and sweet tea provide much more added sugar to infant diets than do soft drinks/sodas.

There is also an urgent need to fill an information void about the quality of women's diets, globally. Recent reviews (1-2) have documented many gaps between micronutrient intakes and needs, and analytic work previously published (3) and on-going (as mentioned by FANTA) show consistent associations between simple proxy indicators of food group consumption and the micronutrient adequacy of women's diets, at population level. Dietary diversity indicators have been incorporated in the results framework of on-going USAID-funded projects; in addition, global advocacy initiatives to address the entire "1000 Days" are now calling explicitly for dietary diversity indicators to track women's diet quality (<http://thousanddays.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Nutrition-in-the-Post-2015-Agenda-Technical-Brief.pdf>). DHS data on food group consumption by adult women would also be useful to national governments aiming to track adherence to national food-based dietary guidelines.

Finally, we also strongly support the WHO/PAHO/HKI proposal to add a simple and field-tested question to provide information on threats to the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes.

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1. Torheim LE et al. Women in resource-poor settings are at risk of inadequate intakes of multiple micronutrients. *J Nutr.* 2010 Nov;140(11):2051S-8S.
2. Lee SE et al. Dietary intakes of women during pregnancy in low- and middle-income countries.

Public Health Nutr. 2013 Aug;16(8):1340-53.

3. Arimond M et al. Simple food group diversity indicators predict micronutrient adequacy of women's diets in 5 diverse, resource-poor settings. J Nutr. 2010 Nov;140(11):2059S-69S.
