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## Anthropometric Measurement and Dietary Pattern of Rural Farmers in Osisioma Ngwa Lga Abia State, Nigeria

ADA OGUIZU<sup>1</sup>, JOY ORINKPA<sup>2</sup>, EBELE OBI<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Human Nutrition and Dietetics, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike Abia State Nigeria., Human Nutrition and Dietetics,

<sup>3</sup>Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Human Nutrition and Dietetics, Nigeria

### Abstract

#### Introduction

In Nigeria, up to 70 percent of the populations are employed in the agricultural sector. Majority of the farmers are in the rural area. A high proportion of poor households consist of farmers who depend on agriculture as a primary food and livelihood source. Malnutrition is widespread in the entire country and rural areas are especially vulnerable to chronic food shortage and high cost of food (Akinyele, 2009).

#### Objectives

The specific objectives were to: (i) assess the dietary pattern of the rural farmers using food frequency questionnaire; (ii) obtain the anthropometric measurements of the rural farmers; (iii) compare dietary pattern and anthropometric data of the farmers.

#### Methods

Four hundred and fifty farmers were randomly selected from the list of registered farmers in Osisioma L.G.A. A well-structured questionnaire was used to collect information on socio- economic and dietary pattern of farmers. Anthropometric measurements were obtained using standardised procedures. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used for data analysis.

#### Results and Conclusions

Result show that 62.5 % farmers were males and 37.5 % females. About 62.5 % were between 40–50 years while only 1 % was less than 30 years. About 12 % of the farmers were underweight, 26 % overweight and 3 % obese. Results on dietary practices showed that less than half (45 %) of the farmer's source of nutrition information came from the community health workers. Large number of the population (65 %) reported a poor feeding practice and 76.4 % skipped meals. Majority (84.7 %) also indicated not to have enough resources for family feeding. Farming activity revealed majority (86 %) practised crop farming with cassava (48.4 %), garden egg (46.8 %), maize/Oka (46.8 %) and pumpkin/Ugu (37.5 %) as the most farm produce of income. On frequency of feeding; bread, rice and maize were the most consumed cereal. Garri/fufu was the most consumed staple food. Seasonal variation affected fruit consumption with paw-paw (65.7 %), orange (48.5 %) and mango (55.0 %) being the most consumed fruits. This result showed a poor participation of youths in farming. Farmers engaged in crop farming of cassava, maize and vegetables, this lead to a high consumption of cassava and maize products.

**Keywords:** Abia State, anthropometric Measurement, Dietary Pattern, Nigeria , Rural Farmers