



Impact of household budget surveys' design on the measurement of food consumption

Piero Conforti* - Nathalie Troubat
FAO, Italy – piero.conforti@fao.org

Food data are collected in National Household Budget Surveys (NHBS) to assess poverty and update consumer price index. In the absence of better information on individual food consumption, these data have also been used to conduct analysis on food security and nutrition. As NHBS were not originally designed to analyze food security and nutrition, their food data collection questionnaires do not always gather the information that is necessary for such purpose. According to a recent study conducted by FAO, the International Household Survey Network and the World Bank, out 100 surveys assessed only 13% were judged to be completely reliable for analyzing food and nutrition security. Various criteria were considered to assess the suitability of food consumption data for food security analysis: the reference period during consumption was reported, the time frame of the survey, the mode of data capture (recall or diary), whether or not food collected refers to acquisition or actual consumption, the comprehensiveness and specificity of the food list, the quality of the information on food away from home, and seasonality. Each of these characteristics affects the quality of the measurement of food consumption that habitually occurs within the household. It is therefore important to develop guidelines or recommendations on best practices to be adopted when designing a survey to collect food data. To draw such guidelines, it is necessary to develop a good understanding of the impact of survey design on food consumption measurement. The impact can be assessed with two different approaches. First, by piloting surveys that collect food data using different designs. Second by analysing existing surveys that collect food data from different designs. The first option is more accurate, but also more time- and resource- consuming than the second. This paper will present results on the impact of different survey design on food consumption measurement from a panel of about sixty surveys. It will also discuss the case of the Mongolia 2007/08 Socio Economic Survey, which collects food data through different designs. Results show that food consumption measurement is very sensitive to survey design. Collecting information on food acquisition rather than food consumption increases the estimated level of average Dietary Energy Consumed by about 200 kcal/person/day. This range of difference may imply totally different results in certain countries, and can seriously bias the planning of food security and nutrition intervention programs. Not only the mean, but also the distribution of foods data among households is heavily affected by the survey design. There is a difference of about 20 percent between the coefficients of variation of Calories per person per day derived from surveys that focus on acquisition and those derived from surveys that focus on consumption. This difference may have strong impact on the estimates of Prevalence of Undernourishment, such as those that FAO undertakes in the framework of the global monitoring of food security. To overcome this problem, surveys employed by FAO in the global monitoring are treated for this extra variability (Wanner et al, 2014). The analysis of the Mongolia 2007/08 Socio Economic Survey confirmed results of the panel, and showed how the length of period in which the food diary is administered to households impacts food consumption measurement. The analysis shows how to derive an optimal number of days for administering the diary. More analyses of surveys that collect information through different designs will facilitate the preparation of guidelines on best practices -- and bad practices to be avoided -- when collecting food data in household surveys.

Keywords: food consumption measurement; household survey design; access to food This is where the abstract is placed. It should include a statement about the problem being addressed in the presentation (and paper, if submitted). Continue with a discussion of why it is important to address this problem. This may be followed by some summary information about the models and methods developed and/or used to address the problem. Conclude with a description of the key results and contributions that will be covered in the presentation (and paper).

Keywords: first keyword; second keyword; third keyword; fourth keyword.