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

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### 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 (Khayesi, 2001). Poverty in rural areas is much more widespread than in urban areas. 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, unbalanced nutrition, poor quality and high cost of food (Akinyele, 2009).

#### Objectives

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

#### Materials and Methods

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

#### Results

Result show that 62.5% 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% were overweight and 3% were obese. Results on dietary practices showed that less than half (45%) of the farmers' 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, which is an unhealthy nutritional practice. Majority (84.7%) also indicated not to have enough resources for family feeding. Farming activity revealed majority (86%) practiced 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. Bread, rice and maize were the most consumed cereal. Garri/fufu topped the most consumed root and tuber food produce. Seasonal variation affected fruit consumption with paw-paw (65.7%), orange (48.5%) and mango (55.0%) being the most consumed fruits.

#### Conclusion

This study showed poor participation of youths in farming. Farmers in the study location majorly engaged in crop farming of cassava, maize and vegetables, this led to a high consumption of cassava and maize products.

#### Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest