CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES • OFFICE OF WOMEN'S HEALTH

CWHS

Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

WOMEN WHO ATE LESS IN ORDER THAT FAMILY MEMBERS HAD ENOUGH FOOD, BY AGE, RACE/ ETHNICITY AND FAMILY STATUS, CALIFORNIA, 2000

Women who are food secure have assured access to enough food that is nutritious and safe. Women who are food insecure do not have assured access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.[1] When food is scarce or unavailable, women may sometimes forego eating in order to provide enough food for their families, consequently compromising their own health.

The 2000 California Women's Health Survey (CWHS) provided an opportunity to examine how women coped with food insecurity. The CWHS asked women, ***"During the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you wanted or not eat at all so that some other member of your household would have enough to eat?"*** Questions about race/ethnicity and age were also included in the survey.

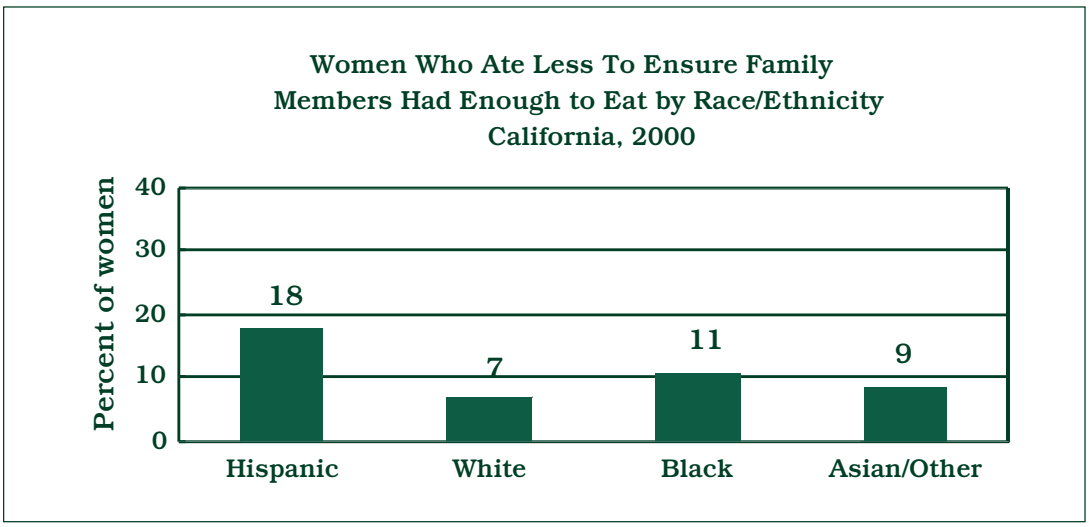
- Among all women surveyed, 10% responded that they did eat less in order to ensure other family members had enough to eat.
- Black and Hispanic women were more likely than White or Asian/Other women to go without food to ensure other family members had enough to eat.
- Women ages 35-54 (12%) were just as likely as younger women ages 18-34 (13%) to go without food to ensure that other family members had enough to eat.
- Women with children under age 6 were more likely to go without food than women who didn't have children under age 6 (15% vs. 8%).

1 G, Andrews M, Klein B. "Measuring Food Security in the U.S.: A Supplement to the CPS." USDA Food and Consumer Services, Office of Analysis and Evaluation, Alexandria, VA January 1996.

Cancer Prevention and Nutrition Section, Cancer Control Branch, California Department of Health Services; Research and Evaluation Branch, California Department of Social Services

Public Health Message:

Denying oneself food so that others in the family may eat is a nutritionally risky behavior practiced by many California women, particularly Hispanic women and those with young children living in the household. Efforts are needed to promote increased participation by women in federal nutrition assistance programs, such as Food Stamps.



Issue 3, Summer 2002, Num. 12