

Food Deprivation and Income Deprivation Indicators at National and Sub-National Levels: Methodological Issues

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Abstract: Indicators to measure income and food deprivations have been useful for understanding food insecurity at national and within country levels. This paper focuses on two indicators: the prevalence of food deprivation (under nourishment) and the prevalence of critical food poverty. Both indicators are based on nutritional underlying criteria and are derived from food consumption and income data collected in household surveys. The prevalence of food deprivation is the Millennium Development Goal indicator number five and is based on the distribution of energy consumption. While the prevalence of critical food poverty is a new indicator, it links food deprivation with income deprivation based on the distribution of income.

The linkage is the concept of minimum dietary energy requirement used in the FAO methodology as determined to be the cut-off value in the distribution of energy consumption for estimating under nourishment. The critical food poverty line for estimating the prevalence of critical food poverty is the cost of the minimum energy requirement based on energy-yielding nutrient prices for a macro-nutrient balanced diet accessible to low income population groups.

The macro-nutrient balanced diet is based on recommendations from a Joint WHO/FAO Expert Consultation on Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases held in Geneva in 2002. Examples presented in the paper illustrate results of both indicators for a sample of countries on different continents.

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