

Summary

The Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine (IOM), part of the National Academies, was asked to evaluate the use of various dietary assessment tools and to make recommendations for the assessment of inadequate or inappropriate dietary patterns. These assessments should accurately identify dietary risk of individuals and thus eligibility for participation in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). The Committee on Dietary Risk Assessment in the WIC Program was appointed for the 2-year study and directed to develop an interim report which was to include (1) a framework for assessing inadequate diet or inappropriate dietary patterns, (2) a summary of a workshop on methods to assess dietary risk, and (3) the results of literature searches conducted to date.

This interim report includes these three components. Building on the approach used in the 1996 IOM report, WIC Nutrition Risk Criteria, the framework proposed by the committee identifies characteristics of dietary assessment tools that can identify dietary patterns or behaviors for which there is scientific evidence of increased nutrition or health risk in either the short or long-term. The proposed framework consists of eight characteristics that a food intake and/or behavior-based tool should have when used to determine eligibility to participate in WIC programs. In order to be considered useful and effective, tools should:

- use specific criteria that are related to health, growth, or disease
- allow prioritization within the category of dietary risk
- have acceptable performance characteristics

- be suitable for the culture and language of the population served
- be suitable for the skill level of the population served
- be appropriate for age and physiological condition
- be responsive to operational constraints
- be standardized across states/agencies.

This interim report also includes authored summaries of the presentations at the workshop, along with the results of literature searches conducted in the initial phase of the study.

The committee's review of dietary assessment tools currently in use in WIC agencies has not been exhaustive, but it did not find any tools that have all eight characteristics. The committee's final report will provide recommendations for tools to assess dietary risk in potential WIC participants and give the scientific basis for those recommendations. It will also address the remaining tasks requested by the Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (see tasks 2 through 6).

1. Scope of Work for Assessing Inadequate Diets or Inappropriate Dietary Patterns to Ascertain Eligibility to Receive WIC Services Based on Dietary Risk;
2. Propose a framework for assessing dietary risk among WIC program applicants, focusing on "Failure to Meet Dietary Guidelines" as a risk criterion;
3. Identify and prioritize areas of greatest concern when the U.S. Dietary Guidelines are incorporated into WIC programs;

Examine the use of food-based and behavior-based approaches in assessing

"Failure to Meet Dietary Guidelines" requirements;

4. Evaluate possible approaches for use specifically in the WIC setting;
5. Provide specific cut-offs for establishing WIC eligibility using the identified approaches; and

6. Identify needed research and tools necessary to implement the approaches identified as having the greatest potential for identifying those at nutrition risk.

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