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Income differences in food consumption in the 1995 Australian National Nutrition Survey

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To assess the relationships between an index of per capita income and the intake of a variety of individual foods as well as groups of food for men and women in different age groups.


Subjects: A sample of 5053 males and 5701 females aged 18 years and over who completed the Australian National Nutrition Survey 1995.

Methods: Information about the frequency of consumption of 88 food items was obtained. On the basis of scores on the Food Frequency Questionnaire, regular consumers and irregular consumers of single foods were identified. The relationships between regularity of consumption of individual foods and per capita income were analysed via contingency tables. Food variety scores were derived by assigning individual foods to conventional food group taxonomies, and then summing up the dichotomised intake scores for individual foods within each food group. Two-way ANOVA (income x age group) were performed on the food variety scores for males and females, respectively.

Results: Per capita income was extensively related to the reported consumption of individual foods and to total and food group variety indices. Generally, both men and women in low income households had less varied diets than those in higher income households. However, several traditional foods were consumed less often by young high income respondents, especially young women.

Conclusions: Major income differentials in food variety occur in Australia but they are moderated by age and gender. Younger high income women, in particular, appear to have rejected a number of traditional foods, possibly on the basis of health beliefs. The findings also suggest that data aggregation has marked effects on income and food consumption relationships.

Keywords: per capita income, measurement, food intake, gender, survey, age, Australia
INTRODUCTION

Socio-economic indicators including education and gross household income have been shown to be linked in complex ways to food consumption (Turrell, 1996; Turrell, 1998). Turrell’s work, in particular, is useful in its rejection of common assumptions such as the belief that individuals of lower socioeconomic status (SES) tend to choose foods that are lower in price than do people from higher SES backgrounds. For example, he found that lower SES people often buy expensive food items such as French fries and hamburgers from fast food outlets. His findings suggest that food consumption may be determined more by social and psychological factors than by economic considerations. This is in keeping with the work of anthropologists (eg Fischler, 1993; Douglas & Nicod, 1974), marketing and consumer behaviour theorists (eg Grunert, Brunso & Bisp, 1997) and food psychologists (eg Shepherd & Sparks, 1994; Steptoe, Pollard & Wardle, 1995) which suggests that foods fulfil a range of symbolic functions, in addition to meeting satiety and nutritional needs. Foods are often purchased to provide non-nutritional, social psychological benefits (Whiteman, 1966).

Income may, nevertheless, be an important influence on population food consumption patterns, not only because of economic imperatives, but also because income is a useful indicator of social class and cultural preferences (Tomlinson & Warde, 1993). People from different income strata are likely to have experienced different levels of education and different roles and opportunities within society (Najman, 1993; Turrell, 1998). Indeed, Tomlinson and Warde (1993) in their analyses of the British Family Expenditure Survey found that social class differences in food consumption patterns remained during the last decades of the twentieth century in Britain. They noted that eating habits reflect the British class structure, being less a function of income than the class structuring of taste.

There is a general assumption, which has rarely been tested, that people from higher SES backgrounds tend to consume foods which are either more novel, more conventionally nutritious (eg lower in fat varieties; Wardle, Parmenter & Waller, 2000), or more luxurious than foods consumed by lower SES individuals (Worsley, 1988; Worsley, 1989). Apart from this general expectation little is known, however, about the ways in which household income is associated with food intake. The Australian National Nutrition Survey (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1997) offers an opportunity to examine the relationships between both per capita income and gross household income (a commonly used index of social economic status), and habitual food consumption. The use of income as a measure of a household’s spending power is, however, not without problems (Rossiter, 1995). Not only is there no agreement on what exactly constitutes a household’s income (Smeeding & Weinberg, 2001), but there are also different ways of computing income resulting in different meanings (Rossiter, 1995). Per capita income is a measure of the amount of money a person can spend, while gross household income reflects lifestyle opportunities and is strongly correlated with educational...
background and age cohort effects (Loudon & Della Bitta, 1993). Per capita income has been shown to be related to nutrient intake (unpublished manuscript by Worsley, Crawford, Ball & Blasche, 2001) and gross household income to intake of individual foods (Turrell, 1996).

One of the difficulties in understanding trends in food consumption across social strata is the level of measurement of the phenomenon under investigation. Nutrient estimates are often based upon more or less arbitrary aggregations of the frequency of reported intakes of individual foods that are unrelated to actual patterns of consumption. Typical classifications of foods into fruits, vegetables, spreads etc are based upon assumptions about the importance of particular criteria such as whether the food is a seed, or has been processed. One shortcoming of such aggregations is that affordable and less affordable foods may be grouped into the same category. It is therefore reasonable to argue that only at the level of individual foods can there be some certainty that the consumer’s knowledge and circumstances have influenced the choice of that food.

This study had two aims. The first was to examine the association of income as an indicator of socio-economic status and food intake. The second aim was to establish the effect of using different methods of aggregation of individual food intake on the association between income and food consumption. Thus we examined in detail the relationship of per capita income with consumption of individual foods and groups of foods.

**METHOD**

**Procedure**

Data from 10,754 adult participants in the Australian National Nutrition Survey (NNS) 1995 were analyzed (ABS, 1999). NNS participants were recruited from the study population of the 1995 National Health Survey (NHS) (ABS, 1995). Recruitment procedures for the 1995 NHS and NNS surveys are described elsewhere (ABS, 1995; 1997). Briefly, for the NHS, a stratified multi-stage area sampling technique was used to obtain a random, nation-wide sample of 23,800 households. Of households selected to participate, 91.5% households responded, with a total of 57,633 persons interviewed. Of those, 22,562 were selected to participate in the NNS. The sample for the NNS was systematically selected from the NHS private dwelling sample covering urban and rural areas across all States and Territories of Australia. The NNS sub-sample was designed to provide desirable estimates of nutrient intake differences across groups (for example, national level, state level and regional estimates by age group and sex). A total of 13,858 persons (61% of those selected) consented to participation in the NNS. The present study uses data provided by those 10,754 people aged 18 years and over (5053 males, 5701 females) who completed a food frequency questionnaire (FFQ) (ABS NNS Cat 4801.0).
Measures

Food intake
The FFQ is a retrospective food frequency questionnaire that aims to provide semi-quantitative information on the longer term use of 107 foods and beverages, as well as 11 vitamin and mineral supplements (ABS, 1997). The ABS had classified a person’s record as unusable if more than 20 out of the 107 food items were completed incorrectly. For the purpose of this analysis, beverage items and mineral supplements were excluded, leaving a total of 88 food items. Respondents indicated average frequency of consumption in the last 12 months on a nine-point scale, (a) never, or less than once a month, (b) 1-3 times per month, (c) once per week, (d) 2-4 times per week, (e) 5-6 times per week, (f) once per day, (g) 2-3 times per day, (h) 4-5 times per day, (i) 6+ times per day.

Frequency of consumption was transformed into a dichotomous variable by defining a food as being “regularly consumed” if it was consumed 1-3 times per month or more frequently, and as “irregularly consumed” if it was consumed never or less than once per month.

Food group variety scores were derived from the summed consumption scores of the foods within a group with food regularly consumed scored as ‘1’ and food irregularly consumed scored as ‘0’. Total food variety was the sum of variety scores from all food groups. The food variety groups were defined as: total variety (range 0-88), fruit variety (range 0-8), vegetable variety (range 0-25), cereal variety (range 0-9), fish variety (range 0-4), meat variety (range 0-15), snacks variety (range 0-5), and spreads variety (range 0-5). Since the confectionary food group consisted of only two items, it was combined with the cakes and biscuits food group into a sweets variety food group (range 0-7).

Income
Cases for which annual household income was “not stated”, “negative” or “not applicable” were excluded from analyses. The calculation of per capita income was performed by first finding the median of each of the remaining 16 gross annual household income groups. The median was then divided by the number of persons living in the household irrespective of age or earning capacity. The new variable was subsequently collapsed into three groups containing an approximately equal number of subjects. This resulted in the following per capita income categories: (1) up to AUS$8749.75, (2) AUS$8749.75 - AUS$17499.50, and (3) over AUS$17499.50.

Statistical analyses
The relationships of per capita income with the consumption of individual foods were examined via contingency tables analyses within each sex (CROSSTABS procedure) (SPSS, 2001). In addition, because income is known to decline as people age (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998), the relationship between income and food consumption was investigated for
each of three age groups (18-34, 35-49, 50 years or more). Separate ANOVA (by per capita income category and by age) for men and women were conducted on each of the food variety scores. To investigate whether there would be interaction effects between age and per capita income, a 3 (income group) by 3 (age group) analysis of variance was performed for males and females on food variety scores. Contingency table analyses were tested at a significance level of p<.01 to reduce the chance of type I error. Only significant relationships are reported for the contingency table analyses.\(^1\)

**RESULTS**

**Per capita income and food consumption**

Inspection of the findings presented in Tables 1 through 4 suggested several generalisations: There were many statistically significant associations between per capita income groups and individual foods. Generally, high and middle income respondents were more likely to report regular consumption of foods than low income respondents. For women, large differences in between income groups in consumption (10% or greater) were associated with capsicum (red pepper), mushrooms, vegetable stir-fry, zucchini (courgette), mixed dishes with chicken, other seafood, cream or sour cream, pasta, rice, oil and vinegar dressing pizza, potato/corn chips, cream chocolate biscuit, and chocolate. For men, large differences were associated with capsicum (red pepper), lettuce, mushrooms, side salad, sweet corn, vegetable stir-fry, zucchini (courgette), ham, luncheon meats, mixed dishes with chicken, other seafood, cream or sour cream, flavoured milk drink, yoghurt, muesli, pasta, rice, mayonnaise dressing, oil and vinegar dressing, hamburger, pizza, potato/corn chips and chocolate. For all these foods, fewer people in the lowest per capita income group reported consumption.

For many foods, this positive income-consumption gradient was more pronounced among people aged 50 years or more (Tables 3 and 4). Conversely, intake of other foods was reported less by people in the high income group than by people in the low income group. Among women, these foods included: baked beans, brussel sprouts, peas, roast lamb, mince dishes, roast pork and sausage, fried fish and cooked porridge (Table 1). Among men they included: baked beans, cauliflower, silverbeet/spinach, eggs, and cooked porridge (Table 2). Most of these income group differences were small (less than 10%).

For a number of foods (e.g. baked beans, brussel sprouts, peas, sweet corn, vegetable casserole, various meats, fried fish, some dairy products, white bread, hot chips and meat pies) more low income women under 50 years of age were regular consumers than high income women (Table 3). Among men, however, only eggs, pork roast and sausages

\(^1\) The same analyses were performed for gross household income and yielded similar results. Only analyses for per capita income are thus presented. The results for the gross household income analyses are available from the authors.
exhibited this relationship (Table 4). For men aged 50 years and more, low income was associated with more regular consumption of baked beans and cauliflower.

**Dietary variety and income**

Men in the low income group consumed less varied diets than those in the other income groups (Table 5). Men in the middle income group had significantly less varied intakes of fish, snacks, and spreads than men in the high income group. In general, women in the low income group had less varied diets than females in the higher income groups, except for fish and fruit. Women in the middle income group had similar dietary variety to high income women except that they ate a wider variety of meats compared to women in the low or the high income groups.

**Age group and gender differences**

Within each sex there were substantial differences between the age groups’ consumption of the various groups of foods (Table 6). Among men, the 18-34 year olds had a greater variety than any other age group of cereal foods, dairy, meats, snacks, spreads, and sweets. Men aged 50 years or more had the lowest variety of all age groups for most of the food groups. However, they consumed a greater variety of vegetables and fruit than men aged 18-34 years. The relationships between food variety and age were similar for women, with women aged 50 years or more generally consuming less varied food than women in any other age group. Fruit variety was the only exception to this pattern since no significant age group differences were found.

**Interactions between income and age**

Means and standard deviations of food variety scores in the three different age and income groups are shown in Tables 7 (women) and 8 (men). For women, the following interactions between age and per capita income were significant; dairy variety \( F(4,3451) = 2.88, p < .05, \) partial eta sqd = .003, fruit variety \( F(4,3661) = 3.61, p < .01, \) partial eta sqd = .004, snack variety \( F(4,3732) = 3.74, p < .01, \) partial eta sqd = .004, spreads variety \( F(4,3668) = 3.50, p < .01, \) partial eta sqd = .004, meat variety \( F(4,3416) = 4.71, p < .01, \) partial eta sqd = .005, vegetable variety \( F(4,3302) = 5.88, p < .001, \) partial eta sqd = .007, and total food variety \( F(4,2354) = 4.05, p < .01, \) partial eta sqd = .007. The interaction effect appeared predominantly to have been due to women in the 50 year and over age group consuming a greater variety of foods with increasing income, while women in the other two age groups showed different consumption
patterns, with food variety either remaining relatively unaffected by income or being lower in the high income group compared to the low income group. A typical example of the relationship between income and food variety for women in three different age groups is displayed in Figure 1.

INSERT TABLE 7

INSERT FIGURE 1

For men, significant interactions emerged between age and per capita income for fish variety (F(4,3157)=2.51, p<.05, partial eta sqd=.003), and vegetable variety (F(4,2884)=2.45, p<.05, partial eta sqd=.003). While income had almost no effect on the fish variety consumed by 18-34 year old men, men in the other two age groups consumed on average a greater variety of fish the higher their per capita income was. A similar pattern emerged for vegetable variety. Men above 34 years of age consumed, on average, a greater variety of vegetables the higher their income was. For males aged 18-34 years, vegetable variety of the low and the high income group was lower than that of the medium income group. The relationship between income and food variety for men is exemplified in Figure 2.

INSERT TABLE 8

INSERT FIGURE 2

DISCUSSION

These findings show that there were substantial differences in the food consumption of various male and female income groups. Some groups, such as low income men in general and low income men aged 50 years or more in particular, had less varied diets than others. The gender differences in food variety scores have been observed in other studies (eg Hodgson, Hsu-Hage & Wahlqvist, 1994) but the income group differences are relatively new (see Turrell, 1996). The reasons for the observed associations between the income and demographic groups are unknown, but it is possible that the strong confounding of household income and basic educational attainment (age when left school) suggests that secondary education may be involved (Johansson, Thelle, Solvoll, Bjørneboe & Drevon, 1999; Lasheras, Patterson, Casado & Fernandez, 2001). For example, less educated men may earn less income and thus choose foods differently from others.

The general finding that fewer people with low household incomes consumed foods regularly and had less varied diets suggests that income may be a key factor in food consumption. However, many of the foods which were under-represented among people with low
household incomes are relatively inexpensive (e.g., capsicum, broccoli, onion, white bread) whilst others (e.g., seafood, beef, veal) are quite expensive. That is, there appears to be little relationship between consumption and the price of the foods. Turrell (1998) came to a similar conclusion in his study of food consumers in Brisbane, Australia.

It is possible that the lower rates of regular consumption of individual foods among low-income households could have been offset by larger serve sizes of the foods consumed, or even by a reporting bias, though the latter, if it existed, does not account for the more regular consumption of several “traditional” foods by low income men and women. It is more likely that the effects of income on food consumption are confounded by other factors such as age, which may affect consumers’ expectations about the appropriate frequency of food intake, etc. Indeed, our results show that age had pervasive effects. Age appears to have emphasised the income-consumption differential among the over fifties, particularly with regard to traditional foods. On the other hand, there appears to have been a marked reduction in the consumption of “traditional” foods (e.g., baked beans, brussels sprouts, peas, sweet corn, vegetable casserole, various meats and fried fish, some dairy products, white bread, hot chips and meat pies) by young high income people, especially younger women. The rejection of high fat foods is akin to the “health” trends reported by Wardle et al. (2000) in the UK. However, the lesser consumption of low fat foods like brussel sprouts, peas and sweet corn suggests that additional influences, such as “fashion” are present.

The results suggest that this sample contained few people whose financial resources limited their access to a wide variety of foods. However, data had only been collected from people in private dwellings with the response rate being at 60% (ABS, 1997). It thus appears that many marginalised people were not included in the National Nutrition Survey. In addition to the possible limited representativeness of the sample, the analytic techniques we have used here are somewhat limited. They do represent the measurement level of data that was collected and they do illustrate some aspects of income influences on variety of food consumption, but they do not allow complete control over age, gender and educational confounding of the data. Path analytic methods (Falk & Miller, 1992; Sellin, 1986) might allow more comprehensive analysis of the data but with a loss of clarity.

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, per capita median (and gross household) income was extensively related to regularity and variety of food consumption. The richness of the differences in the consumption of individual foods was only partly reflected in the summed food group scores, though it should be noted that the income group differences in the various variety scores were small. However, this clearly demonstrates the effects of data aggregation, raising the possibility that variation in income differences in food and nutrition indices reported in the literature can be
partly attributed to aggregation effects. Therefore, caution is required in the interpretation of
the various reported indices of food and nutrition intakes. Qualitative studies may be
necessary to identify some of the subtleties of the influence of income and other demographic
variables on food consumption.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Heart Foundation Career Development Award.
REFERENCES


Table 1. Percentage of women in three different median income groups reporting consuming individual foods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food group</th>
<th>Food item</th>
<th>Up to $8,749.75</th>
<th>$8,749.75 - $17,499.50</th>
<th>More than $17,499.50</th>
<th>$2χ</th>
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</thead>
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<td><strong>Fruit</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vegetables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baked beans</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>13.45**</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Broccoli</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td>86.3</td>
<td>24.90***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brussel sprouts</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>34.89***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capsicum</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>63.88***</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lettuce</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>12.03**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Mushrooms</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>55.96***</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Onion, leeks</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>11.46**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peas</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>10.02**</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Side salad</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>89.7</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>35.30***</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vegetable stir-fry</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>87.2</td>
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<td>Zucchini</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>68.1</td>
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<td><strong>Meat</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ham</td>
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<td>73.9</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>14.18**</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Lamb, roast</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>80.2</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>16.67***</td>
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<td>Mince dishes</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td>75.4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mixed dishes with chicken</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>72.9</td>
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<td>Pork, roast</td>
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<td>Sausage</td>
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<td>60.5</td>
<td>48.7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Fish, fried</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>46.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other seafood</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>47.00***</td>
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<td><strong>Dairy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cream or sour cream</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>26.07***</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flavoured milk drink</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Yoghurt</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>62.9</td>
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<th>2nd Quarter</th>
<th>3rd Quarter</th>
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<td>Cereal</td>
<td>Cooked porridge</td>
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<td>32.6</td>
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<td>Muesli</td>
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<td>87.8</td>
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<td>Wholemeal bread</td>
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<td>81.1</td>
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<td>Spreads</td>
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<td>62.5</td>
<td>79.53</td>
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<td>Cakes and biscuits</td>
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<td>57.6</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>21.85</td>
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<td>Confectionary</td>
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<td>Other confectionary</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>60.2</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>17.43</td>
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*Australian Dollars

Note: * p<.01
    ** p<.001

N=3775-3873
Table 2. Percentage of men in three different median income groups reporting consuming individual foods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food group</th>
<th>Food item</th>
<th>Up to $8,749.75(^a)</th>
<th>$8,749.75 - $17,499.50(^a)</th>
<th>More than $17,499.50(^a)</th>
<th>(\chi^2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td><strong>Fruit</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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* Australian Dollars
N=3224-3298

Note:  *
     ** p<.01
     ** p<.001
Table 3. Percentage of women in three age groups and in three different per capita income groups reporting consuming individual foods

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*Australian Dollars

The smallest number of subjects for any individual food in any of the age groups was n=1034.

Note:  
* p<.01  
** p<.001
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<th>More than $17,499.50&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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### Meat

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### Fish

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### Dairy

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Spreads

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Snacks

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<td>28.4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>32.16***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cakes and biscuits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>35-49 yrs</th>
<th>50 yrs plus</th>
<th>50 yrs plus</th>
<th>50 yrs plus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other puddings, desserts</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>9.42**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Australian Dollars

The smallest number of subjects for any individual food in any of the age groups was n=925.

Note:  
* p<.01  
** p<.001
Table 5. Means and standard deviations of food group variety for men and women from different per capita income groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food group</th>
<th>Low (n=1193)</th>
<th>Medium (n=1328)</th>
<th>High (n=1801)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal</td>
<td>5.17a</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>5.63b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>5.72a</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>6.28b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>1.92a</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>2.06b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>4.98a</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>5.42b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>9.07a</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>9.74b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snacks</td>
<td>2.65a</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>3.08b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spreads</td>
<td>2.70a</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>2.87b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweets</td>
<td>3.95a</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>4.44b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>16.98a</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>17.65b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total variety</td>
<td>54.37a</td>
<td>12.24</td>
<td>57.78b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal</td>
<td>5.56a</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>5.86b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>6.06a</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>6.29b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>1.89a</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.99a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>5.79a</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>5.90a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>8.76a</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>9.24b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snacks</td>
<td>2.32a</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>2.65b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spreads</td>
<td>2.87a</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>3.06b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweets</td>
<td>4.07a</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>4.46b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>17.88a</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>18.25b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total variety</td>
<td>55.96a</td>
<td>11.92</td>
<td>58.08b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each measure, means that do not differ significantly at p<.05 share superscripts.

1 Median income groups are defined as “low” (up to AUS$8,749.75), “medium” (AUS$8,749.75-AUS$17,499.50) and “high” (more than AUS$17,499.50)
Table 6. Means and standard deviations of food group variety for men and women from three different age groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food group</th>
<th>18-34 years</th>
<th>35-49 years</th>
<th>50 years plus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M SD</td>
<td>M SD</td>
<td>M SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal</td>
<td>5.92 a 1.61</td>
<td>5.71 b 1.69</td>
<td>5.17 c 1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>6.79 a 1.86</td>
<td>6.25 b 1.80</td>
<td>5.58 c 1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>2.11 a,b 1.37</td>
<td>2.16 a 1.26</td>
<td>2.02 b 1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>5.08 a 2.31</td>
<td>5.23 a,b 2.25</td>
<td>5.36 b 2.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>10.27 a 2.96</td>
<td>9.66 b 3.19</td>
<td>8.94 c 3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snacks</td>
<td>3.98 a 1.26</td>
<td>3.42 b 1.42</td>
<td>2.11 c 1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spreads</td>
<td>3.09 a 1.36</td>
<td>2.97 b 1.38</td>
<td>2.68 c 1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweets</td>
<td>4.69 a 2.15</td>
<td>4.38 b 2.19</td>
<td>3.90 c 2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>16.95 a 4.63</td>
<td>18.24 b 3.96</td>
<td>17.34 c 3.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total variety</td>
<td>58.78 a 12.36</td>
<td>58.12 a 11.49</td>
<td>53.78 b 11.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food group</th>
<th>18-34 years</th>
<th>35-49 years</th>
<th>50 years plus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M SD</td>
<td>M SD</td>
<td>M SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal</td>
<td>6.11 a 1.48</td>
<td>5.90 b 1.57</td>
<td>5.45 c 1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>6.69 a 1.85</td>
<td>6.22 b 1.92</td>
<td>5.81 c 1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>1.88 a 1.28</td>
<td>2.03 b 1.23</td>
<td>1.95 a,b 1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>5.84 a 2.04</td>
<td>5.98 a 1.94</td>
<td>5.85 a 1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>9.20 a 3.42</td>
<td>9.07 a 3.33</td>
<td>8.48 b 3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snacks</td>
<td>3.37 a 1.40</td>
<td>2.81 b 1.49</td>
<td>1.69 c 1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spreads</td>
<td>3.06 a 1.33</td>
<td>3.15 b 1.34</td>
<td>2.89 c 1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweets</td>
<td>4.73 a 1.99</td>
<td>4.32 b 2.14</td>
<td>3.98 c 2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>17.87 a 4.14</td>
<td>18.93 b 3.55</td>
<td>18.01 a 3.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total variety</td>
<td>58.89 a 11.06</td>
<td>58.22 a 11.34</td>
<td>54.39 b 11.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each measure, means that do not differ significantly at p<.05 share superscripts.
Table 7. Means and standard deviations of food group variety for women from three different age groups and per capita income groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food group</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Up to $8,749.75&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>$8,749.75 - $17,499.50&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Over $17,499.50&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal</td>
<td>18-34 years</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>6.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35-49 years</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>5.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50 years plus</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>5.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>18-34 years</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>6.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35-49 years</td>
<td>6.26</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>6.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50 years plus</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>5.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>18-34 years</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35-49 years</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50 years plus</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>18-34 years</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>5.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35-49 years</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>5.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50 years plus</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>5.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>18-34 years</td>
<td>9.55</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>9.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>50 years plus</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>8.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snacks</td>
<td>18-34 years</td>
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<td>1.47</td>
<td>3.51</td>
</tr>
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<td>35-49 years</td>
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<td>1.44</td>
<td>2.98</td>
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<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>1.66</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.31</td>
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<td>1.30</td>
<td>3.16</td>
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<td></td>
<td>50 years plus</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>2.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweets</td>
<td>18-34 years</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>4.97</td>
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<tr>
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<td>35-49 years</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50 years plus</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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</table>

Cont’d…
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>18-34 years</th>
<th>35-49 years</th>
<th>50 years plus</th>
<th>Total variety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>18.06</td>
<td>18.94</td>
<td>17.41</td>
<td>18.06</td>
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<td>3.68</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>4.10</td>
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<td>18.07</td>
<td>17.82</td>
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<td>3.43</td>
<td>4.35</td>
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<td>4.09</td>
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<td>53.01</td>
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<td>10.74</td>
<td>11.23</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Australian Dollars*  
N=2363-3741
Table 8. Means and standard deviations of food group variety for men from three different age groups and per capita income groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food group</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Up to $8,749.75$</th>
<th>$8,749.75 - $17,499.50$</th>
<th>Over $17,499.50$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal</td>
<td>18-34 years</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>5.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal</td>
<td>35-49 years</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>5.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal</td>
<td>50 years plus</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>5.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>18-34 years</td>
<td>6.64</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>6.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>35-49 years</td>
<td>6.95</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>6.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>50 years plus</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>5.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>18-34 years</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>35-49 years</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
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<td>1.87</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>18-34 years</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>5.36</td>
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<td>35-49 years</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
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<td>5.05</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>5.53</td>
</tr>
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<td>Meat</td>
<td>18-34 years</td>
<td>10.24</td>
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<td>10.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>35-49 years</td>
<td>9.41</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>9.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>50 years plus</td>
<td>8.57</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>9.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snacks</td>
<td>18-34 years</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
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<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
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<td>2.11</td>
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<td>1.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spreads</td>
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<td>2.55</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>18-34 years</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>4.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>35-49 years</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweets</td>
<td>50 years plus</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cont’d…
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetables</th>
<th>18-34 years</th>
<th>35-49 years</th>
<th>50 years plus</th>
<th>Total variety</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>17.81</td>
<td>16.72</td>
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<td>18.20</td>
<td>17.45</td>
<td>17.30</td>
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<td>4.73</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>4.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.69</td>
<td>18.52</td>
<td>17.97</td>
<td>16.69</td>
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<td>4.70</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>3.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total variety</td>
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a Australian Dollars N=2095-3217
Figure 1. Mean fruit variety of women in three different income and age groups
Figure 2. Mean fish variety of men in three different income and age groups.