

A NUTRITIONAL SURVEY OF CERTAIN KANSAS  
HOUSEHOLD GROUPS ON DIFFERENT WELFARE PLANS

by 4589

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## INTRODUCTION

Interest in the subject of nutrition has increased within the last few years. United States government agencies have promoted nutrition related programs concerned with improvement of the health and well-being of low-income families such as Commodity Distribution, Food Stamp, and Public Assistance Programs.

Results of the National Nutrition Survey conducted by Schaefer and Johnson (1) infers that the general health of individuals was not at a level expected from a country with the highest standard of living in the world. There is evidence that undernutrition over an extended period of time lowers the physical condition and the learning ability and behavior of children. An awareness that nutrition levels parallel the psychological and physiological development from fetal stage through the full pendulum of life increases the significance of raising the nutritional level of our population.

It has been the policy of the United States Department of Agriculture to make selected foods available to low-income families who need them to prevent, correct, or improve nutritional deficiencies. This has been done by the Commodity Distribution Program, Food Stamp Program, and Public Assistance Program.

Limited data were found in the literature related to nutritional level of participants in programs of welfare assistance. Therefore this study was designed to survey selected low-income household groups in three Kansas counties who

received federal assistance in some form. Differences in the recommended daily food intake of respondents attributable to plan of assistance, level of income, household group size, age and educational level were ascertained. Differences in the recommended daily food intake of female respondents attributable to weight classification and skinfold thickness measurements also were determined.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Types of Federal Government Food and Welfare Programs

Three major welfare programs used in Kansas to aid the poor and needy are: (a) Commodity Distribution Program, (b) Food Stamp Program, and (c) Public Assistance Program. Rules for participation in any of the programs have been established and eligible persons may choose whether or not they wish to take part.

Commodity Distribution Program. Legislative authority for food donation for the needy was given by the Agricultural Act of 1935 and 1949, as amended. These authorities relate, respectively, to surplus crop removal and price-support legislation. The program is administered nationally by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Consumer and Marketing Service through its Commodity Distribution Division (2, 3).

The USDA initiated, in 1961, a policy making a wider variety of foods available for this program. They encouraged the states to expand their distribution operations to include more cities and counties. Great expansion in food availability and participation has taken place in the program since 1960.

The list of available surplus commodities depends on the status of the federal inventory and current agricultural market conditions. During fiscal year 1969 needy families received the following food items: dry beans, bulgar, corn meal, whole wheat and all purpose flours, canned meat, lard, nonfat dry and evaporated milks, peanut butter, raisins, rolled wheat,