

Diet Analysis of White versus Non-white Pregnant and Lactating Women

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Maternal nutritional status has become exceedingly important as the prevalence of breastfeeding has increased 49.5 % in the past decade. Our objective was to analyze and compare nutrient intakes, not including prenatal vitamins, of 161 pregnant and lactating women ages 18-45 years. Eighty Black and Hispanic women were combined to comprise the non-white group and were compared to 81 white mothers. The Block 1998.2 Food frequency questionnaire was administered to each mother. Two-tailed *t*-tests were used to compare white vs. non-white average, daily intakes of calories, protein, fat, carbohydrate, calcium, phosphorus, folate, vitamin D, % fat, % protein, % carbohydrate, as well as number of servings of fruit, vegetables, and dairy. Calcium, phosphorus, folate, and vitamin D were further adjusted per 100 calories because of their significance in maternal-fetal nutrition. Results indicated that of these nutrients, non-whites consumed significantly more calories, carbohydrate, and folate ($p < 0.004$) while consuming significantly less fruit servings. After adjusting for caloric intake, non-whites consumed significantly less Vitamin D and folate than whites ($p < 0.03$). Both groups consistently ate less than the recommended intake for pregnancy and lactation in folate, vitamin D, and servings of vegetables, fruit, and dairy. In conclusion, while whites demonstrated an overall better quality diet, both groups were deficient in many nutrients proven essential for optimal maternal-infant development. If poor nutrient intakes go undetected in today's increasing trend of breastfeeding in all ethnic groups, the risk for nutrition-related conditions such as rickets/osteopenia, neurological defects, obesity and others will continue to threaten this population.