R esearch documenting the importance of mothers’ influence on their children is robust and multi-dimensional regarding personality traits, character, and countless psychosocial attributes, but the physiologic impact of maternal diet on not only fetal and neonatal health, but health of the offspring long term, is relatively less well known (1). New research has confirmed that maternal overweight and obesity, conditions that now affect the majority of women in their child-bearing years, increase the risk for adiposity, as well as numerous other adverse birth outcomes (2). These findings have compelled additional research to more definitively establish these relationships, but how does a mother’s diet quality influence the family’s food intake and eating behaviors? Also, how does socioeconomic status affect her nutrition knowledge, food choices, and overall diet quality of the family? What about first-time mothers? Are they at increased risk for sub-optimal diet quality themselves and, if so, is this associated with similar problems in the family? These are but a few of the questions pursued this month by Australian authors McLeod and colleagues (p 696) who report cross-sectional data from the Melbourne Infant Feeding, Activity, and Nutrition Trial (INFANT). The authors report noncompliance with the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, especially in the breads and cereals and vegetable groups, thereby identifying target areas for more proactive dietary intervention and training. While overall level of nutrition knowledge was relatively high, less than 2% of the mothers could report core food questions. First-time mothers were especially deficient in this knowledge, thereby indicating the need for proactive nutrition counseling prenatally.

With this in mind, the results reported by Mangano and colleagues (p 687) describing insufficient intake of dietary calcium, is disturbing. While this paper concentrates on the older age groups, the women of reproductive age likewise do not meet recommended amounts based on these recent National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey data.

**WIC WELCOMES ONLINE EDUCATION**

Bensley and colleagues (p 749) compared the impact of Internet nutrition education to traditional approaches specifically related to fruit and vegetable consumption among WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children) clinics across Michigan. The investigators sought findings across a broad range of educational outcomes including perceptions, readiness to change, dietary intake, and overall additive effects. Both knowledge and behavior appeared to be favorably affected by the online education, raising new and potentially valuable public health approaches to providing mass education with measureable outcomes.

**CONTRIBUTIONS OF PULGAS TO DIETS AMONG THE COLONIAS IN TEXAS**

Food can be purchased from multiple sources in this country, but in some locations these nontraditional providers may constitute the primary source of nutritional intake. Dean and colleagues (p 705) take us to the South Texas border with Mexico to introduce the concept of the pulga, or flea market, as a common source of food for residents of the colonias, that are likewise found in this southern part of the country. This qualitative research study evaluated the use and impact of these pulgas to the diets of those living nearby and raises awareness of the need to study further the overall importance of nontraditional sources of food purchasing in preparation for development of food policies and public health nutrition education.

Likewise, Johnston and colleagues (p 716) report that the opportunity to pair certain preferred foods with various fruit and vegetable choices might help to increase preferences for these choices among Mexican-American youth. Peanut butter serves as the preferred link in this interesting study.

**OPEN ACCESS**

This month, Ammerman (p 678) provides an interesting Commentary on open access to scientific research and scholarly literature. Most of us in the academic community are aware of the recent explosion of open access material and recognize the timeliness, global relevance, and unique findings that are partly responsible for its popularity. The fact that it raises new challenges regarding costs, library use, and the peer-review process, among other issues, contributes to the ongoing debate about its over-arching value and long-term utility.

These are but a few of the many options available for your edification this month.

Best Regards.

Linda Van Horn, PhD, RD

Editor-in-Chief

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**References**
