

SECOND CARNEGIE INQUIRY INTO POVERTY
AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Nutritional status of adults
in Willowmore
by

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Carnegie Conference Paper No.209

ISBN 0 7992 0660 1

NUTRITIONAL SURVEY IN WILLOWMORE

Adults from the age of eighteen were weighed and arm circumferences measured, to assess their nutritional status.

A pair of bathroom scales, a steel tape measure and a fibre glass tape measure were used for the study to obtain a good sample all the houses were visited and all the adults found at home were weighed. Visiting the homes over the weekends ensured getting the make population, who were at work during the week.

Summary of Results

Total adult population, both 'Coloured' and African was 636

Total female population was 457

Total male population was 179

Of these, 248 had standard weights. 108 women were underweight, which is 24,53% of the female population. 113 men were underweight, which is 63,12% of the male population. Therefore 221 out of 636 adults were underweight, which is 35% of the total adult population. 158 women were more than 20% of standard weight and only 13 men were more than 20% of standard weight. Altogether 171 of the 636 adults were overweight, which is 26,8% of the population.

WEIGHT FOR HEIGHT RESULTS				
Total No of 179 MALES	Less than 90% of standard	Less than 80% of standard	Less than 70% of standard	Less than 65% of standard
	24	56	63	3
% of total Male pop.	13%	31%	35%	1,6%
Total No of 456 FEMALES	62	139	161	10
% of sample	13,5%	13,4%	35%	2,1%

ARM CIRCUMFERENCES					
Sex	Standard	90% of standard	80% of standard	70% of standard	65 % of standard
Males	29,3	26,3	23,4	20,5	17,5
Females	28,5	25,7	22,8	20,0	17,1

Sexes	RESULTS			
	< 90%	< 80%	< 70%	< 65%
Males	23	56	63	3
Females	37	78	96	7
Totals	60	134	159	10
% of total population	9,4%	21%	25%	1,5%

<u>VARIABLE NAME</u>	<u>TOTAL FREQUENCY</u>	<u>MEAN AGE</u>
	636	
Age 25 or less	176	21
26 to 35	127	26
36 to 45	95	41
46 to 55	89	46
56 to 65	85	81
Over 65	63	72

The Coloured community has a much higher younger population than the African population, which has a much higher old-age pensioner population.

WILLOWMORE							
Variable	Total Frequency	Mean	Standard Variation	St. Error of Mean	Coeff. of Variation	Largest Value	Range
Age	636	40,45	17,88	0,71	0,44	96,0	78
Height	636	59,18	4,06	0,55	0,24	120,0	106
Weight	636	1,57	0,08	0,003	0,052	1,90	1,5
Arm circumference	636	25,92	3,97	0,16	0,153	42,0	24,0

Xhosa : 95 > 636
Coloured : 541

XHOSA FEMALES		
Age Groupings	Weight/Kg	S.D.
25 or less	62,05	11,25
26 to 35	63,33	14,59
36 to 45	64,20	19,19
46 to 55	66,22	22,21
56 to 65	68,77	17,54
Over 65	70,31	12,97

COLOURED FEMALES		
Age Groupings	Weight/Kg	S.D.
25 or less	53,6	9,98
26 to 35	58,9	15,85
36 to 45	60,96	15,33
46 to 55	62,07	15,67
56 to 65	62,38	16,01
Over 65	65,79	16,64

XHOSA MALES		
Age Groupings	Weight/Kg	S.D.
25 or less	55,4	5,03
26 to 35	62,0	5,83
36 to 45	71,6	13,90
46 to 55	56,3	4,16
55 to 65	58,6	9,37
Over 65	69,0	12,04

COLOURED MALES		
Age Groupings	Weight/Kg	S.D.
25 or less	55,1	6,8
26 to 35	56,03	12,25
36 to 45	57,07	14,05
46 to 55	56,57	9,44
55 to 65	55,21	11,33
Over 65	55,57	12,19

FEMALES					
KHOSAS			COLOURITS		
Age Groupings	\bar{X} Height	S.D.	Age Groupings	\bar{X} Height	S.D.
25 or less	1,55	0,07	25 or less	1,53	0,06
26 to 35	1,56	0,04	26 to 35	1,55	0,08
36 to 45	1,53	0,08	36 to 45	1,55	0,04
46 to 55	1,52	0,04	46 to 55	1,53	0,06
56 to 65	1,56	0,06	56 to 65	1,52	0,07
Over 65	1,50	0,04	Over 65	1,50	0,07

MALES					
Age Groupings	Height	S.D.	Age Groupings	Height	S.D.
25 or less	1,66	0,05	25 or less	1,64	0,06
26 to 35	1,62	0,05	26 to 35	1,66	0,06
36 to 45	1,68	0,02	36 to 45	1,64	0,05
46 to 55	1,66	0,06	46 to 55	1,64	0,04
56 to 65	1,57	0,08	56 to 65	1,64	0,08
Over 65	1,59	0,08	Over 65	1,60	0,05

ARM CIRCUMFERENCES

FEMALES					
XHOSA			COLOURED		
Age Groupings	Mean Arm Circumference	S.D.	Age Groupings	Mean Arm Circumference	S.D.
25 or less	25,51	2,5	25 or less	24,53	2,8
26 to 35	27,28	2,7	26 to 35	26,04	3,9
36 to 45	27,15	4,9	36 to 45	26,99	4,3
46 to 55	29,16	6,3	46 to 55	27,95	5,1
56 to 65	28,00	3,2	56 to 65	27,03	4,2
Over 65	28,81	3,2	Over 65	28,35	4,9

MALES					
Age Groupings	Mean Arm Circumference	S.D.	Age Groupings	Mean Arm Circumference	S.D.
25 or less	23,6	1,5	15 or less	24,9	2,0
26 to 35	27,3	3,6	26 to 35	24,3	2,0
36 to 45	28,3	3,9	36 to 45	25,03	3,6
46 to 55	24,5	1,3	46 to 55	24,19	2,4
56 to 65	26,3	3,9	56 to 65	23,63	2,6
Over 65	27,1	2,8	Over 65	23,66	2,5

Willowmore is a place of extreme poverty among Non-Whites. Employment is very difficult to find in the whole district, of small towns and mainly sheep and ostrich farms. Wages are very low. Some of the men are employed by the Roads department and others by the South African Railways, working away from home and visit either fortnightly or monthly. The rest of the men work in neighbouring farms, where the average monthly wage is R80,00. The local hospital, hotel, shops and private homes employ mainly women. The average wage for a hotel worker is R60 where as domestic workers have an average take-home wage of R30.

THE TOTAL POPULATION OF WILLOWMORE

Whites	390
Coloureds	4,734
Africans	315

Since there is a very small White population there are few employment prospects, which also keeps wages low. A large number of families have at least one member on an invalid grant of R83,00 per month.

The African area, Down location, has two-roomed houses, for which the monthly rent is R11,00. Most of the inhabitants are pensioners who were moved from the farms. Their pension is R98,00 every two months. Out of this amount they have to pay rent, for two months, which is R22,00, leaving them R76,00 to buy fuel (as the place is extremely cold in the winter), food for the next two months and clothes.

As it is right out, food prices are much higher in Willowmore than in urban supermarkets.

COMPARISON OF FOOD PRICES

Willowmore	Price	Cape Town Supermarket	Price
1 Kg Maize meal	49C		45C
1 Kg Samp	55C		49C
1 Kg Mealie Rice	49C		45C
1 Kg white sugar	75C		67C
500 g sugar beans	R1,29		R1,09
500 g Omo washing powder	R1,22		99C

1 Pkt Tennis biscuits	81c	65c
1 Pkt Marie biscuits	71c	63c
500 g Tastic rice	69c	61c

It is also interesting to note that in the report of the first Carnegie Inquiry into the 'Poor White Problem' the author states that the great majority of the rural population 'eat meat once a day or less often ...'. The diet of the non-white poor in Willowmore is even more lacking in variety than that of the poor Whites in the 1920s, nearly sixty years ago.

When people were asked about diet, the inventory suggested a very low intake of nutritionally important foods. Meat and vegetables are eaten only once a week, on Sundays. Indeed most of the pensioners said that they bought meat only on pension days. This is usually chicken pieces. Milk is bought mainly for tea and coffee; they use invariably powdered milk.

In KwaZulu most people find it difficult to get fresh vegetables and meat. They are, however, better off than the people of Willowmore because they use blackjack, pigweed and other leaves that grow wild. People have a lot of fruit that grow wild like guavas. In the Karoo, there is absolutely nothing growing and people have to buy everything they eat.

Most families said they ate bread, coffee, tea, 'mealie pap', mealie rice, samp and beans as their staple foods.

TYPICAL MEALSBreakfast

Mielie Meal Porridge

Coffee

Lunch

Bread

Coffee

Supper

Mealie Pap with fish/beans/offal

Mealie Rice with " / " / "

Samp and beans with fish/beans/offal

Willowmore is very dry, with very low rainfall, and is suitable only for sheep farming. The non-white people have no gardens and have to buy all their food commodities from the shops. They just do not earn enough to have a good diet.

HEALTH STATUS

Inadequate nutrition, in conjunction with bad housing and overcrowding, contributes to the high incidence of colds and pulmonary tuberculosis. When people were asked about their last visit to a doctor or the hospital it was revealed that at least one member of the family had been or was still at the tuberculosis sanatorium.

DENTAL CARIES

Dental Caries was about the only sign of overt malnutrition. A large number of adults had all or most of their teeth missing. This is caused by a high carbohydrate diet.

MENTAL FATIGUE

There was an interesting correlation between earnings, nutritional status and general hygiene. Where the household income was more than R200 per

month, and people were healthy and well nourished the house was much cleaner and pleasant. Where they had very little income, looked unhealthy and had nothing, the house was often very dirty and neglected. People did not even bother to line their shelves with patterned old newspaper, where they did in 'higher' income houses. This can be attributed to mental fatigue. People who get hungry have no energy for cleaning or tidying up a house which gives them nothing more than just shelter.

Likewise, there was a lot of drinking and drunkenness in the neglected, low income houses. Plain poverty and adverse social circumstances have a lot to do with this high incidence of alcoholism, for, alcohol has a numbing and care-diminishing effect which makes life more tolerable for those who have to struggle daily for the bare necessities of living.

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These papers constitute the preliminary findings of the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa, and were prepared for presentation at a Conference at the University of Cape Town from 13-19 April, 1984.

The Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa was launched in April 1982, and is scheduled to run until June 1985.

Quoting (in context) from these preliminary papers with due acknowledgement is of course allowed, but for permission to reprint any material, or for further information about the Inquiry, please write to:

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