

TRIP REPORT OF LINDSAY H. ALLEN
June 3 - September 9, 1984

LOCATION: Instituto Nacional de la Nutricion in Mexico City, and the field site in Solis.

Purpose: In my capacity as a Principal Investigator, to plan and review field work and analysis in the University of Connecticut - Mexico CRSP on Intake and Function.

Persons Contacted: Virtually all 143 personnel working on the project in Mexico. The majority of my time was spent with Dr. Alfonso Mata (Field Coordinator), Dr. Adolfo Chavez (Principal Investigator), Ramon Lira (Data Manager, Mexico) and the Chiefs of Area in the field. We also had visits from: Dr. Tiffany Field and N. Vega-Lahr from the University of Miami; Jeffrey Backstrand (Data Manager, Connecticut); and Drs. Yarrow, Thompson and Luyck (The External Evaluation Panel site visitors).

INTRODUCTION

In this field trip report I will not attempt to review all areas of progress in Mexico since these are explained in the Annual Report written and submitted by me in September, 1984. Rather, I will summarize those areas of work in which I participated most intensively.

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF QUESTIONNAIRES, AND DATA COLLECTION FORMS

While almost all of the questionnaires and data collection forms were in place in late 1983, a few changes and revisions were implemented during the summer of 1984.

One major activity was to completely redesign the coding forms for the family and individual food intake data. The new forms have several advantages:

1. both household and key individual data are entered

on the same form, saving the need to enter identifiers etc. twice.

2. all need for hand-calculations has now been eliminated. A program has been written to calculate individual intakes of nutrients from household recipes, and to convert cooked foods to raw foods, etc. This will save much time, capture more information (e.g. recipes) on the computer, and avoid errors in calculations.
3. the proportion of a prepared dish eaten at each meal is clearly listed, so that it is now easy to run a visual check on whether e.g. the percentage consumed during several meals equals 100% when the dish has been entirely consumed.

Additional activities included the development and implementation of a "Supplemental Infant Foods" questionnaire. I also supervised the continuing study of food analysis, and assisted in the tabulation and analysis of the data obtained in Mexico. A large number of dried samples of cooked beans, rice and pasta were brought back to Connecticut for proximate analyses. New Conversion Factors for changing cooked to raw foods have been calculated; because we are now capturing recipes on the computer, any future changes in the Conversion Factors can be easily accommodated.

Protocols for supplemental studies of Child Care and Hygiene Practices were developed. Although some of these data are already being collected during the Activity and Morbidity interviews, we feel that our relationship with the study families is now sufficiently good that we can attempt some in-home observations, at least for short samples of time. These observations, which measure similar behaviors to those observed in the Kenya study, will be started in October.

DATA MANAGEMENT

As described in detail in the Annual Report, the Mexico project has had to change its data entry system from reliance on a free, government-run organization (Salud Publica, Computer Division) and the assistance of IBM-Mexico, to the installation and use of Apple microcomputers in the field. While most of the new system was in place by June, a number of problems in data entry and programming surfaced during the summer. The most serious problems have been resolved, although an IBM-PC would be a very valuable addition to our field data entry facility.

Most of the data management activities are described in the trip report of Jeff Backstrand (October, 1984) who spent from August 14 to September 1 in Mexico. Mr. Backstrand had long discussions with Ramon Lira (Data Manager, Mexico), Alfonso Mata and myself. He has written a description of the current data management system, which is attached to his trip report. I also spent many days with Mr. Backstrand going through every questionnaire in the field and reviewing or designing codes and forms for data capture. Since Mr. Backstrand only started with our project in July, this was a very useful process for all involved, including the Area Chiefs who now understand how "coding" is done. Mr. Backstrand was also present during the IEEF visit and was consulted several times by the site visitors.

DATA CODING

A great deal of time was spent on working with the Chiefs of Area to develop code-books and computer coding forms. For example, although the various scores for the Psychology tests had been calculated in the field, a final decision had still to be made on which raw data and scores would also be usefully captured in the computer. After discussion with Dr. Field and N. Veyra-Lahr during their site visit, followed by several days of assistance by Jeff Backstrand (UConn data manager) a final plan was developed for Psychology coding. As requested by the ME, the plan was presented at the September SCB meeting.

After examining the data, Gretel Pelto developed codes for the Socio-cultural interviews. I assisted by training the appropriate Area Chief to code these interviews, and by coding a large number myself. The Activity interview data were also examined and coded into 166 categories for data entry purposes.

LABORATORY WORK AND RMR

It has been my responsibility to purchase the appropriate laboratory reagents and equipment for use in the field. While most equipment has by now been imported and installed in a newly-renovated laboratory, additional acquisitions during the Spring and Summer included a micro-plate reader, Beckman Metabolic Cart and bicycle ergometer.

With Margarita Mata (head of the field laboratory) I reviewed laboratory protocols, designed analysis procedures, designed the system for laboratory quality control, and ordered additional supplies and reagents. Meetings were held with Hoescht-Mexico, who are offering to loan us (free

of charge) a laser nephelometer for the immunology assays. The reason for our mutual interest in this is that it is extremely difficult to import radio-immunodiffusion plates into Mexico; the use of laser nephelometry would avoid this problem.

ADMINISTRATION

Administrative duties filled much of the summer. These included:

- i) with Gretel Pelto, writing an extensive response to an accumulation of memos and questions which arrived from the Management Entity during June
- ii) preparing a revised version of the budget up to the end of the project
- iii) preparing for, and being present during, the External Evaluation Panel site visit
- iv) preparation of the Annual Report, sent to the ICI early in September
- v) with Alfonso Plata, designing and writing of substudies to be presented for approval to the SCB in September
- vi) responding to the ICI's requests for further rationales/defenses etc. of protocols for presentation at the SCB meeting
- vii) various other tasks such as reviewing project receipts, obtaining permission for imports, etc.