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Collaborative Research Support Program (CRSP)

NUTRITION INTAKE AND FUNCTION

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TRIP REPORT

Mexico City, Mexico

12/5/85-12/8/85

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Lindsay H. Allen, Ph.D.
University of Connecticut
Mexico Nutrition CRSP

TRIP REPORT

NAME: Lindsay H. Allen

DATES: December 5 - December 8, 1985.

LOCATION: Instituto Nacional de Nutricion, Mexico City.

PURPOSE: As Principal Investigator of the University of Connecticut - Instituto Nacional de Nutricion CRSP, to deliver laboratory supplies to INN, to discuss data management issues, to collect tapes containing a large amount of field data, to review the budget situation, and to discuss the budgetary and personnel implications of winding down the project.

December 5

Left Mansfield Center at 5.30 a.m.

Flight AA 801 from Hartford/Springfield to Mexico City, arr. 1.40 p.m.

Taxi to INN. Meeting with the administrators of INN concerning the implications of the potential budget cuts to the Mexico project, and a review of expenditures to date. This meeting was followed by one with the Data Analysis unit (La Unidad de Analisis, UA).

December 6.

Meetings all day at INN, with the UA (Lorraine Schlaepfer, Ramon Lira, Carlos Cevallos, Alfonso Mata), Dr. Adolfo Chavez, Elsa Molina (Field Director), and Margarita Mata (Laboratory Chief).

December 7.

Meeting in the morning with Dr. Adolfo Chavez, and in the afternoon with Margarita Mata.

December 8.

Left Mexico City at 2.17 a.m. on AA 52. Arrived at Hartford 9.56

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a.m. and drove to Mansfield Center.

A summary of the most important discussions and conclusions is as follows:

1. DATA MANAGEMENT.

The project is continue to use hired personnel from Salud Publica to capture data on microcomputers at INN. All of the activities planned in the schedule presented to me in early November have been completed, and a tape was ready for me to take to Connecticut. Data capture is actually ahead of schedule. The only bottle-neck is the transfer of the data captured on diskettes in the Columbia microcomputers to the INN Hewlett Packard mainframe - a necessary step prior to transferring the data to tapes at IBM. For this reason, half of the corrected diet data for Jan - Sept 1984 are still on diskettes and were not transferred to the tape as planned. The problem with transfer of data to the HP is not considered serious, and solutions are being tried. It was pointed out that should INN purchase an IBM-AT then this micro could be taken to IBM and the data could be transferred without problems. However, IBM will not permit micros manufactured by other companies to be used in their facility. The UA will continue to review the various alternatives, including the rent of an IBM in Mexico.

The UA explained the documentation of all of the data on the tape to be carried to UConn. These data consisted of all data from Jan 1984 to either May or August 1985 in the areas of morbidity, anthropometry, family food intake, resting metabolic

rate, the census, family entries and exits, and tests programmed vs executed (i.e. missing data). All of these data had been corrected against the original interview forms and are next to be subjected to range and logic checks at UConn.

The UA expressed interest in purchasing SAS for micros. Starting in January, some members of the UA will be working with IBM programmers to do Critical Path Analysis of our data entry and analysis. IBM is requiring this as part of their cooperation with us, and is prepared to spend whatever resources are necessary for its completion. Our counterpart in IBM has been changed to Carlos del Cueto, who is a time series analysis expert. IBM is also expanding its software library and is trying to change the structure of its data base to facilitate statistical analyses.

I reviewed the progress of data management activities at Connecticut and determined the potential usefulness of programs the UConn team have written for use by the INN group. These will be carried to Mexico in January.

SAMPLE SIZE AND PLANS FOR TERMINATION

Dr. Mata presented a summary of the number of subjects of each type who have been in the study at any time (total # of cases), who are in the longitudinal study, or who have been partially studied and then left or were dropped before data collection was complete. These data are summarized in the following table:

TYPE INDIVIDUAL	TOT. CASES	LONGIT STUDY	PARTIAL STUDY	COMPL.*
Lead female	305	200	105	62
Lead male	304	169	135	74
Lact. female	188	102	86	56
Preschooler	166	93	73	56
Schooler	192	110	82	100
Pregnant f.	160	103	57	100
Infant	112	100	12	57

* % cases that have completed the longitudinal study as of 12/31/85.

A lengthy discussion was held to clarify the criteria for inclusion in the longitudinal or partial study (data from all subjects ever studied will be sent to Connecticut) and the codes used for type of individual. This was a major goal during my visit in order to answer a series of questions posed by the data management team and statistician at UConn.

The above table illustrates what has been a major problem for the Mexico project, namely the high rates of subject drop-out or elimination from the study. Whenever possible such cases have been substituted by the addition of new families and/or individuals, which has meant that the date of final project completion has been delayed. At my request Dr. Chavez agreed to send a memo to Dr. Calloway explaining the number of subjects of each type that Mexico will still have in the project as of January 1986, and precise plans for wind-down and termination of the project. (This memo was sent in mid-December).

3. TRANSFER OF ORIGINAL DATA TO CONNECTICUT

For some time both INN and UConn have been trying to resolve how we are going to have a copy of the questionnaires available at Connecticut. The cost of xeroxing the 300,000 pages of data collected to date is prohibitive, as is the cost of transfer of the copies to the US. We had hoped to rent a microfilm camera for a few months, but these are currently unavailable in Mexico (a post-earthquake decision by many beaurocracies is to microfilm all important paperwork) and are extremely expensive to rent because the rental company insists that its own personnel do the work. In the US, new machines cost about \$30,000. We are still attempting to resolve this issue.

4. BUDGET

Together with Drs. Chavez and Mata, I explained the current budgetary situation, and we prepared a budget prediction for 1986 and 1987. Given the inflation rate in Mexico (gas increased by 80% during my visit), the greatly increased costs of personnel and computer rental prompted by the earthquake, the costs of the UA team, and a delayed exit from the field, it was generally agreed that the cuts (to subsidize the Kenya project) could not come from the Mexico budget, but would have to be borne at Connecticut. These cuts will severely limit our data analysis capabilities. We discussed strategies for terminsting the employment of INN and field personnel.

5. PLANS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS.

Drs. Allen and Pelto will spend 2 weeks in Mexico in January. (Dr. Allen's trip will be paid by another agency).

Ramon Lira (Data Manager) and Carlos Cevallos (Statistician) will spend 2 weeks at UConn in late January. During this time they will meet the project statistician for the first time, learn SAS, discuss quality control checks and programs, and work with the UConn team to develop more software.

Dr. Chavez and Loraine Schlaepfer will attend the DAC meeting at UCLA in February.