

Cash transfer is positively associated with better dietary outcomes – Evidence from a phone survey among women with children less than two years in six states of India

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Introduction

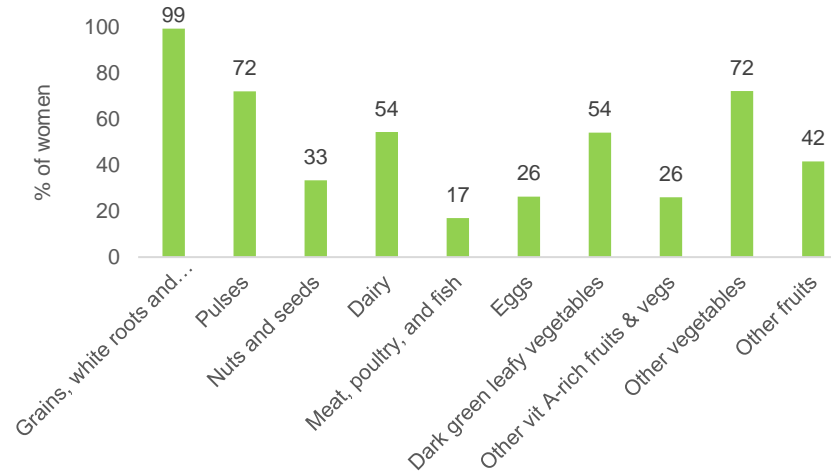
- Women's diet is one of the immediate determinants of maternal and child nutrition

Objectives

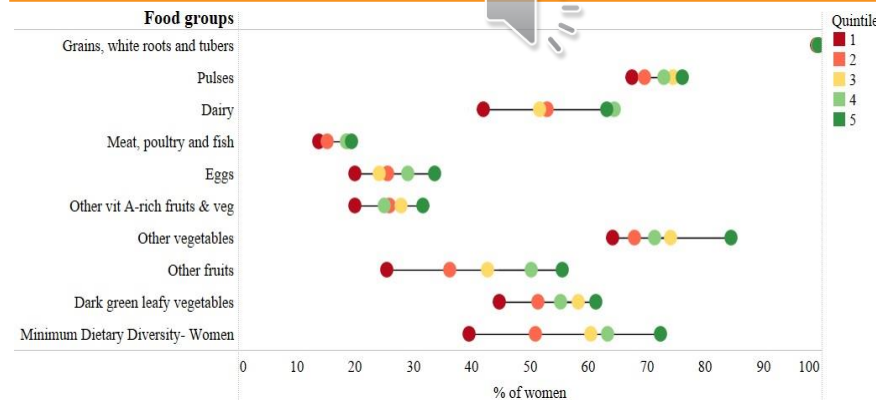
- Examine dietary intake of women with children <2 years of age
- Examine inequity in dietary intake by wealth status
- Assess the role of food or cash transfers in maternal diet diversity

Methods

- Data came from a phone survey of 6,227 women in six states of India.
- Dietary intake was assessed using the diet quality questionnaire which was then recategorized to calculate score for food diversity, consumption of healthy and unhealthy foods, and minimum diet diversity (MDD) for women.
- Inequity in dietary intake was examined using wealth quintiles
- Association between food and cash transfer on maternal diet was examined using multivariate regression analysis controlling for maternal, child, households' factors and state fixed effects.



- Consumption of meat, poultry and fish was lowest, 17%



- Large wealth gradient in consumption of dairy (42% in Q1 vs. 63% in Q5), fruits (22% vs. 55%), and MDD-W (40% vs. 72%).

Coverage of food/cash transfers

HH received food in the last 3 m or women received food during pregnancy and lactation, %

80.2

HH received cash in the last 3 m or women received cash during pregnancy and delivery and lactation, %

19.8

Diet scores



Food group diversity score (FGDS) – 5.0
Minimum dietary diversity- women (MDD-W) – 57%



Global dietary recommendation (GDR) healthy – 4.1



Global dietary recommendation (GDR) limit – 1.2

	FGDS (n=6,576)	MMD-W (n=6,576)	GDR healthy (n=6,576)	GDR-limit (n=6,576)
	β 95% CI	OR 95% CI	β 95% CI	β 95% CI
Received cash ¹	0.45*** (0.33 :0.57)	1.50*** (1.29 :1.75)	0.37*** (0.26 :0.47)	0.29*** (0.22 :0.38)
Received food ¹	-0.06 (-0.17 :0.06)	1.00 (0.87 :1.15)	0.03 (-0.07 :0.13)	-0.07 (-0.14 :0.01)

***p<0.001, **p<0.01 *p<0.05;

¹Cash received by HH in the past 3 months or by women during most recent pregnancy and during delivery and during lactation ; OR=Odds Ratio; %

- Receiving cash transfer was associated with higher food diversity score ($\beta=0.45$, CI=0.33-0.57), healthy ($\beta=0.37$, CI: 0.26-0.47) and limit ($\beta=0.29$, CI=0.22-0.38) food consumption compared to those who did not receive cash.

Conclusions

- The suboptimal diet and inequity in food consumption requires concerted actions to improve diet and narrowing of equity gaps.
- More efforts are required to increase the coverage of already existing cash transfer schemes in India.

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