

WIC Research: Food for Thought

Center for Food Assistance and Nutrition

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SAMSUNG

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Who?

What?

Why?



Research

Studies

Survey

Assessment

Impact
Evaluation

Pilot

Process
Evaluation



What We Won't Talk About...

Unadjusted and adjusted odds of vendors overcharging at least once, logistic regression model findings, base study

Base Study	OR	95% CI	p-Value (t-test)	AOR*	95% CI	p-Value (t-test)
Registers and scanning equipment						
0-2 registers, NO scanning equipment	7.0	4.41,11.01	<0.0001	5.0	3.04,8.31	<0.0001
0-2 registers, YES scanning equipment	3.7	2.03,6.88	<0.0001	3.8	2.09,7.06	<0.0001
3 or more registers	REF	--	--	REF	--	--
Volume of WIC sales in FY 2011 (monthly average)						
Low (<\$7,125)	1.9	1.31,2.85	0.0010	1.4	0.96,2.14	0.0761
High (\$7,125 or more)	REF	--	--	REF	--	--
Identified as high risk by WIC State agency						
Yes	2.3	1.35,3.98	0.0027	1.2	0.65,2.05	0.6170
No	REF	--	--	REF	--	--
Benefit delivery and receipt requirement						
Paper FIs / NO receipt required	3.0	1.73,5.32	0.0002	2.7	1.35,5.50	0.0057
Paper FIs / YES receipt required	1.2	0.62,2.14	0.6421	1.2	0.60,2.49	0.5752
EBT / receipt required (true for all EBT states)	REF	--	--	REF	--	--

*Model includes all significant predictors.

Just for fun!



http://www.fns.usda.gov/ops/wic-studies

USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service

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Other Resources

- > Food & Nutrition Information Center
- > National Agriculture Library
- > National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research
- > Nutrition.gov
- > Peer Review Plans and Guidelines
- > USDA Economic Research Service

WIC Studies

Date

-Year

Date	Title
03/20/2014	National and State-Level Estimates of Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Eligibles and Program Reach, 2011
12/11/2013	Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Participant and Program Characteristics 2012
11/29/2013	2013 WIC Vendor Management Study
08/01/2013	WIC Food Package Cost Report, Fiscal Year 2010
01/02/2013	National and State - Level Estimates of Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Eligibles and Program Reach, 2010
12/01/2012	WIC Erroneous Payments to Vendors: Annual Estimates for FY 2011
05/01/2012	WIC Erroneous Payments to Vendors: Annual Estimates for FY 2010
05/01/2012	Improper Payments to WIC Vendors 2005-2008
05/01/2012	WIC Erroneous Payments to Vendors: Annual Estimates for 2009
04/01/2012	National Survey of WIC Participants II
01/05/2012	Evaluation of the Birth Month Breastfeeding Changes to the WIC Food Packages
01/02/2012	Effects of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC): A Review of Recent Research
12/01/2011	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program For Women Infants, and Children (WIC) Eligibles and Coverage-2000 to 2009: National and State-Level Estimates of the Population of Women, Infants and Children Eligibles for WIC Benefits
12/01/2011	Evaluation of the Birth Month Breastfeeding Changes to the WIC Food Packages Study
12/01/2011	WIC Eligibles and Coverage – 2000 to 2009: National and State-Level Estimates of the Population of Women, Infants, and Children Eligible for WIC Benefits

Print

Why do WIC Research?



- It provides important findings:
- WIC improves pregnancy outcomes
 - Fewer low birth weight infants
 - Increased length of pregnancies
 - Children on WIC have better diets and higher immunization rates
 - WIC reduces healthcare costs
 - *For every dollar spent on WIC, there is a savings to Medicaid of between \$1.77-\$3.13 within the first 60 days after birth*
 - WIC is managed effectively

Why do WIC Research?



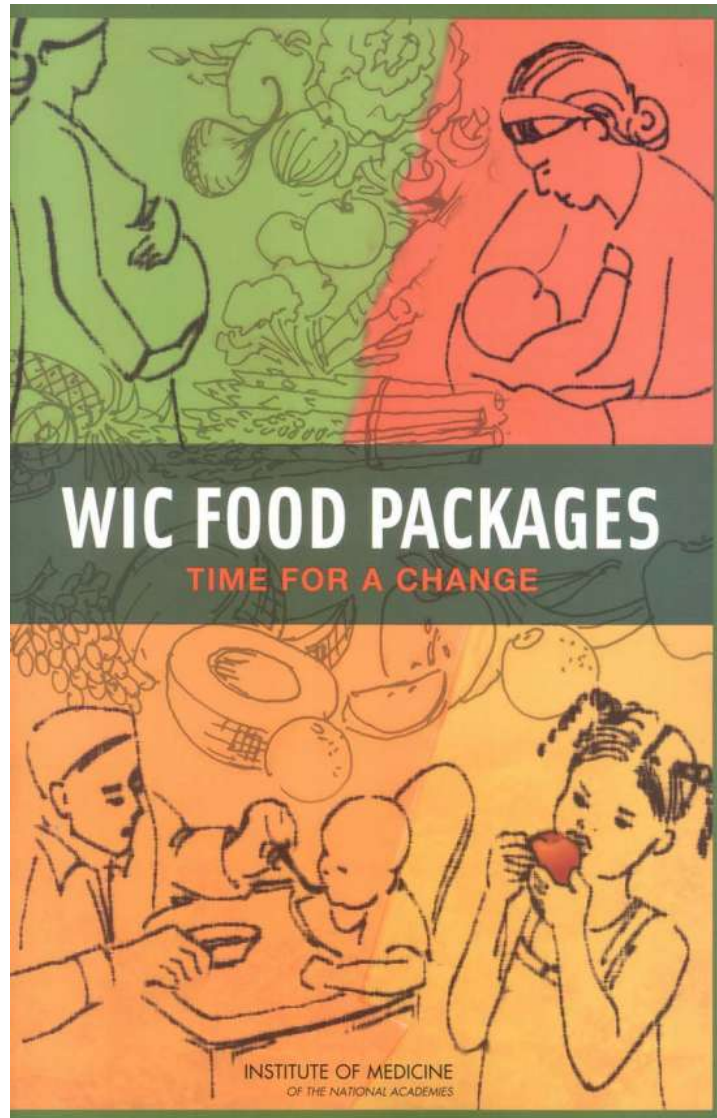
It shapes program policy:

- Nutritional risk criteria
- Nutrition assessment
- Nutrition education and breastfeeding support
- Food packages



Prize
Patrol

C. The Institute of Medicine (IOM)



WIC Research Objectives

- Evaluate program integrity
- Understand WIC participants' characteristics and behaviors
- Identify food purchasing practices
- Improve program services

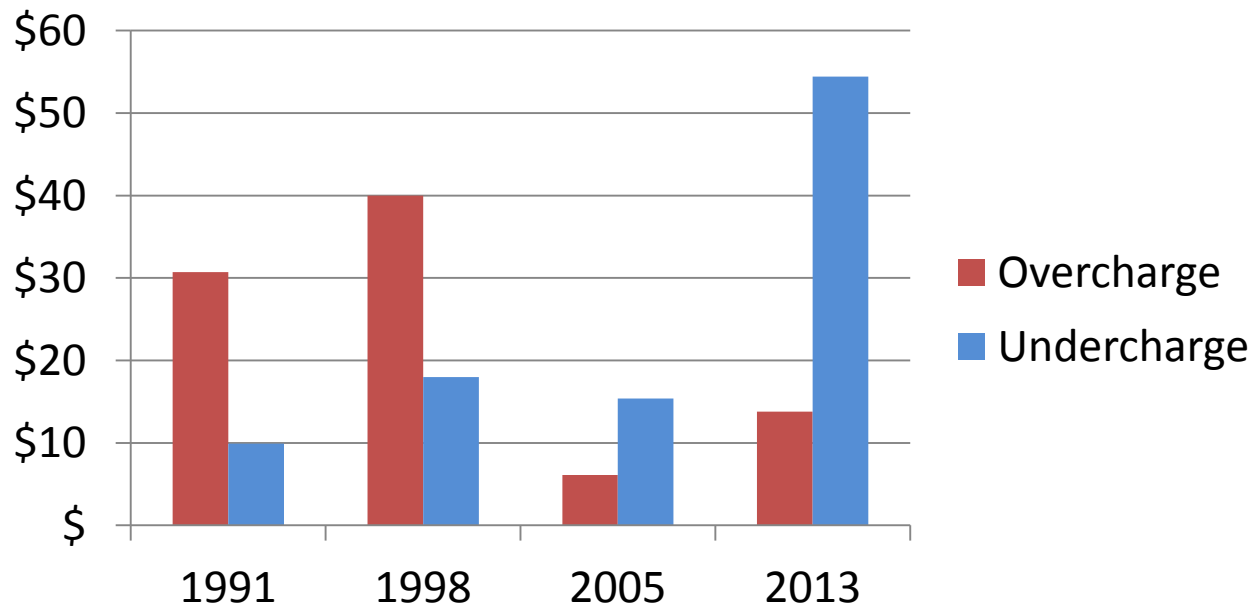
Evaluate Program Integrity



Evaluate Program Integrity

B. Overall, there is more error associated with undercharging than overcharging.

Erroneous Payments
Dollars in Millions



Evaluate Program Integrity: Vendor Management Studies



Evaluate Program Integrity

Findings from 2013 Vendor Management Study

- Program abuse by vendors is small - 0.29%
- Undercharging exceeds overcharging
- Vendor practices associated with program abuse include:
 - Not having the participant sign the food instrument
 - Not providing a receipt
 - Not using scanning equipment
- Substitution of non-WIC foods declined for “traditional” WIC foods but was high for the cash-value benefit for fruits and vegetables

Evaluate Program Integrity: NSWP II

National Survey of WIC Participants II Volume 1: Participant Characteristics (Final Report)



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

April 2012

Evaluate Program Integrity

Findings from National Survey of WIC Participants II

- Error rates are low: Slightly more than 3% of participants were improperly certified for benefits, and slightly less than 3% of benefits were paid in error
- Majority of participants reported making positive changes to their lifestyles as a result of participating in group education sessions
- Majority of participants were very satisfied with WIC staff and services as well as clinic location and facilities

Great job!

Understanding WIC Participants



Understanding WIC Participants



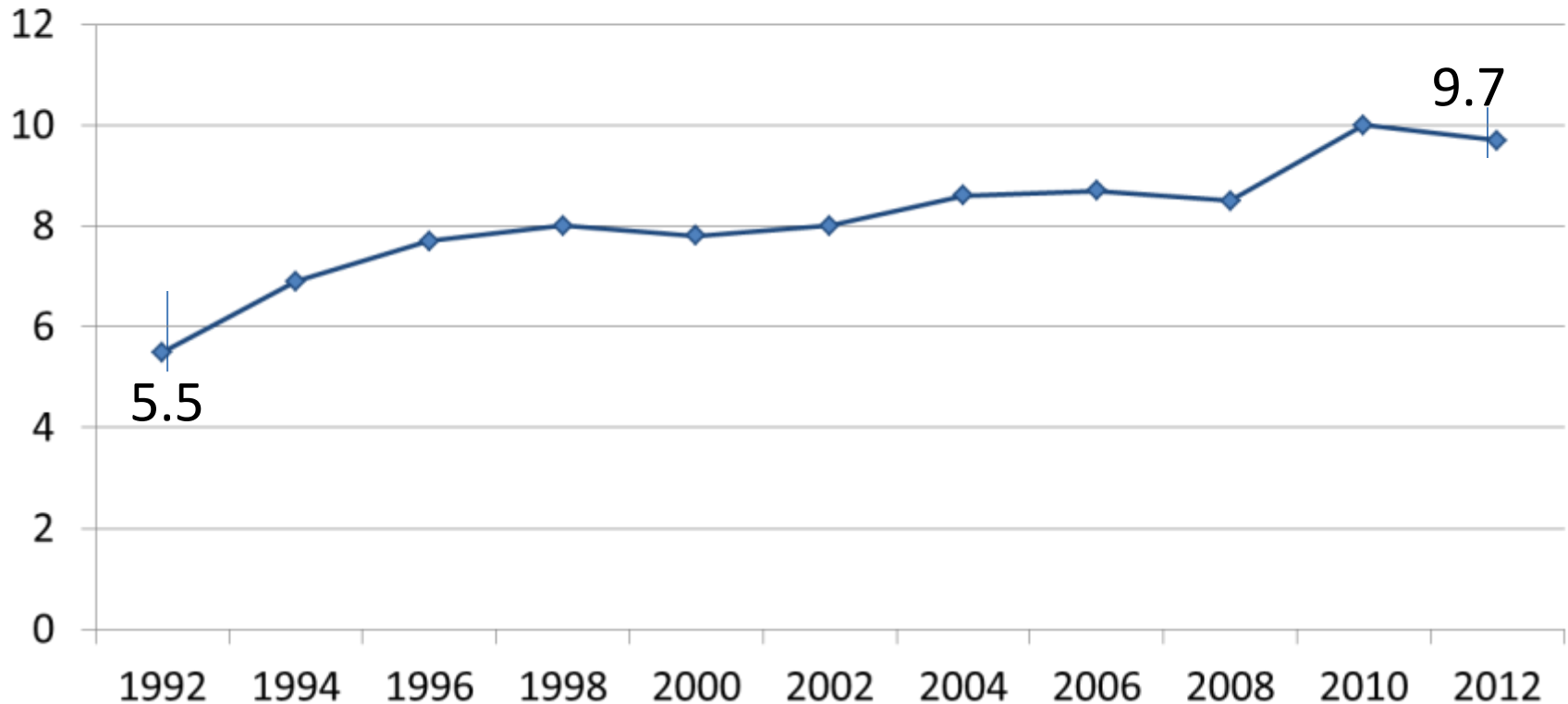
Understanding WIC Participants

C. 11 times



Understanding WIC Participants: The PC Studies

Participants in PC Studies
Number in Millions



Understanding WIC Participants

Findings from the PC 2012 Study

- Three-quarters of WIC participants had incomes of less than 100% of the Federal Poverty Level
- Obesity in children has begun to decline among WIC participants
 - From 16.8% (2008) to 15.3% for 1 year olds
- For the first time, there were more breastfeeding women than non-breastfeeding post-partum women
 - Two-thirds of infants age 6-13 months currently breastfeeding or breastfed at some point

Hooray!

Understanding WIC Participants: Infant and Toddler Feeding Practices Study II



Understanding WIC Participants

Feeding My Baby: A National WIC Study

- Longitudinal study of 4,367 infants to age 2 years
- Mothers and infants enrolled from 80 WIC sites
- Multiple phone interviews with parents/caretakers
 - Demographic, health, dietary and other data
 - Weight and length measurements also obtained
- Data collected on WIC practices and policies in the 80 sites
- Findings will help us understand feeding practices, factors that influence these, and outcomes – *Stay tuned!*



Identify Food Purchasing Practices



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Identify Food Purchasing Practices

A. Whole grains



Identify Food Purchasing Practices: The EBT Study



Identify Food Purchasing Practices

Findings from the EBT Study

- Participants and vendors like EBT
- 12% of families used all benefits; 82% used some; 5% didn't redeem any benefits
- Least used benefits: baby food meat, beans, whole grains
- Larger households = higher redemption BUT
More family members on WIC = lower redemption



Identify Food Purchasing Practices

More findings from the EBT Study

- Participants report some challenges
 - Benefits remaining on card
 - Confusion at check-out
- EBT data will be a valuable resource for program management
- EBT data can help shape national policy

More to come!

Identify Food Purchasing Practices: Food Package Impact on Small Vendors



Identify Food Purchasing Practices

Findings from study of Impact of WIC Food Package Changes on Small Vendors

- Small stores were able to maintain their WIC authorizations
- Small stores overall had a significant increase in the availability of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat milk



Improving Program Services



Improving Program Services



Improving Program Services

- A. They don't know they are eligible
- B. WIC office hours are not convenient
- C. They don't think they need WIC

Not a reason:

- D. They don't like the nutrition education

Improving Program Services: Mid-Atlantic States Participation Study

- Conducted in 3 States – NJ, PA, WV
- Methods:
 - Eligible non-participants
 - Mail survey to 13,000 lower income families
 - Received nearly 2,000 responses; 650 not on WIC
 - Former WIC participants
 - Telephone survey of 760 families dropped within last 12 mos.
 - Focus groups and interviews with a subset of these



Improving Program Services

Findings from Mid-Atlantic States Study

- We asked ‘Why aren’t you participating in WIC?’
 - “I don’t believe I’m eligible”
 - But they were eligible....communication? perception?
 - “Appointment times not convenient”
 - They want evening and weekend hours
 - “I don’t need WIC”
 - Two points of view....not worth it; others need it more
 - “Transportation issues”
 - Location, location, location

Improving Program Services

Findings from Mid-Atlantic States Study

- The positive feedback
 - Nutrition education
 - Breastfeeding services
 - Customer service

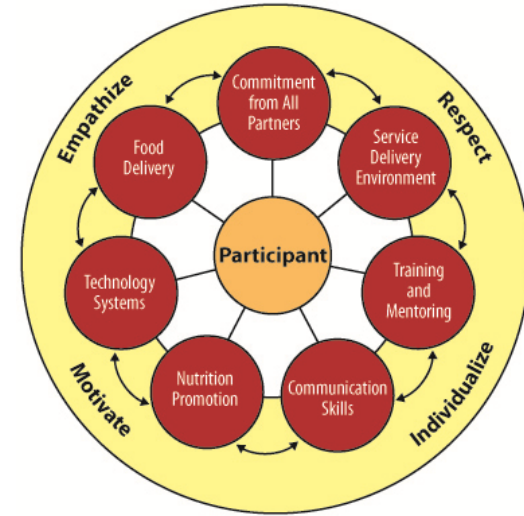


Opportunity: build on strengths, address barriers!

Improving Program Services: Participant-Centered Services

State and local initiatives to enhance WIC:

- Assessment of operations, policies, skills
- Input from local staff and participants
- Build on strengths; address challenges
- Training, mentoring, piloting, updating
- Goal: transform nutrition education and interactions for improved participant outcomes



What do staff and participants say?

Staff Connect with Participant-Centered Services

- “Participant centered counseling has taken the pressure off me to perform and has helped me to focus my energy on the clients needs and not on my agenda.”
- “I am doing a lot more asking and a lot less telling. My confidence in working with participants has increased significantly.”



- “I started asking clients who walk through the door "how can I help you?" vs. "Do you have an appointment?" ... it starts our interaction off on a positive helpful note.”

Participants Connect with Participant-Centered Services

- “I liked sharing what was inside of me, I could express myself.”
- “She listens to what I had to say and I listened to her.”
- “I was impressed that the information was individualized, customized for me.”



Upcoming Federal Studies

Coming Soon....

Nutrition Services Administration
(NSA) Cost Study

WIC Nutrition Education Study

Vendor Risk Reduction Study

WIC Research: Food for Thought

- Why participate in WIC research?
 - Are you concerned about the amount of funding WIC will have in the future?
 - Do you think it's important to demonstrate that WIC is effective and accountable?
 - Is it important to you to understand how services in your state or local agencies could be improved?

WIC Research “Top 10”

Top 10 Reasons to Participate in WIC Research....

- ▲ #10 We want to understand our participants
- ▲ #9 It helps us discover ways to improve program services
- ▲ #8 It's important to demonstrate program integrity and accountability
- ▲ #7 We can document WIC's impact on health outcomes
- ▲ #6 We want to know how to help participants fully use the WIC foods
- ▲ #5 It can help identify ways to increase or maintain caseload
- ▲ #4 It's important for supporting continuation of the program
- ▲ #3 Because you never know when someone will ask if WIC participants are eating beans
- ▲ #2 Participating in WIC research helps you lose weight*

** Disclaimer: results not typical*

#1 Reason: Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, Healthy Families



A young girl with dark, curly hair is smiling warmly at the camera. She is holding a large, vibrant sunflower in front of her face, partially obscuring her left eye. The background is a solid, bright yellow. The text "Thank You!" is written in a white, serif font over the dark center of the sunflower.

Thank
You!