

SUMMARY

The aim of this study was to collect and analyse data relating to certain aspects of food and nutrition in Dominica.

Deaths in the post-neonatal period and in the second year of life accounted for the excess in the Infant mortality and 1 - 4 mortality rates over that of more developed countries. In 1972 and 1973, over half of the deaths of children under five (5) years of age were due to malnutrition, gastro-enteritis and respiratory tract infections. 60% of these occurred under two (2) years of age.

During 1971 - 1973, malnutrition was a primary or secondary diagnosis in 27% of the children under five (5) years of age admitted to the largest hospital in the island.

Private and voluntary agencies played a major role in providing nutrition services. The maternal and child health services provided by the Government needed to be strengthened and expanded; in 1972, only 25% of the young child population were seen at Clinics.

Seventy-eight (78) pre-school children were weighed and measured; three quarters of the children were of normal length for age but less than half had attained their normal weight for age.

There were insufficient data available on patterns of food consumption. Only one (1) dietary survey had been previously undertaken and food balance sheets have never been prepared for the island. The data needed to compile such a balance sheet were not available. The data on food supplies showed a great dependence on imported foods. Food imports accounted for almost half of the total import bill.