Faculty of Health Sciences

RESCAP-MED
Research Capacity for public health in the Mediterranean

Food Consumption Patterns among Syrian Refugees

Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping Unit. WFP Lebanon.
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Background

- **Increasing influx of Syrian refugees** in Lebanon since 2011.

Time	# of Refugees
Dec 2012	129,000
Dec 2013	806,000
Dec 2014	1.1 million

- Since **June 2012**, **WFP** has provided **food assistance** (electronic food vouchers) with the aim of:
  - ensuring refugees have the minimum access to food
  - mitigating risks of engaging in irreversible coping strategies

- To better **understand refugees' vulnerability** situation and inform programme decision making, 2 assessments were conducted in 2013 and 2014: "VASyR".

- **VASyR**: Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees. Nation-wide, multi-sectoral household survey.

- A WFP leaded joint exercise together with UNICEF and UNHCR.

Objectives

VASyR general objective:

To better understand/ monitor and evaluate the vulnerability situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon regarding education, food security, health, nutrition, protection, shelter, WASH.

Specific objectives of this presentation

- Analyze food consumption patterns
- Identify potential risks of malnutrition
- Monitor food consumption changes
- Provide recommendations for food assistance programs

Methodology

- Household multi-sectoral survey
- 2 steps cluster random selection of HH proportional to population size (pps)
  - 1step: random selection of cluster within strata (pps)
  - 2 step: random selection of households within each cluster

VASyR	2013	2014
Sample size	1422	1750
Strata	4 (By registration date)	5 (Regional)
Households/ strata	350	
Clusters / strata	35	

- Household questionnaire – 1 hour long
- Open Data Kit Collect (ODK)- tool

How many days in the past week did any member of your household consume the following food groups

Cereals, grains and cereal products	|__|
Bread and pasta	|__|
Roots, tubers	|__|
Nuts and pulses	|__|
Green leafy vegetables	|__|
Vit A rich vegetables	|__|
Other vegetables:	|__|
Vit A rich fruits:	|__|
Other fruits:	|__|
Liver, organ meat,	|__|
Red flesh meat.	|__|
Eggs	|__|
Fish	|__|
Sugar/sugar products/honey	|__|
Milk/milk products	|__|
Fats/oil	|__|
Spices/condiments	|__|

Indicators

7 day recall food consumption scores

- HWDD: Household Weekly Diet Diversity.
  - Number of food groups consumed in the past week. (Based on 12 HDDS food groups)
  - Diet diversity dimension
  - **E.g.** HWDD = 5; 5 different food groups were consumed in the household in the week.

HDADD: Household Daily Average Diet Diversity

- Mean number of food groups consumed per day in the past week
- Diet diversity and frequency dimensions
- **E.g.** HDADD = 3; on average, 3 different food groups are consumed per day

FCS: Food Consumption Score

- Diet diversity, frequency and nutrition value dimensions

WFP Food Consumption Module







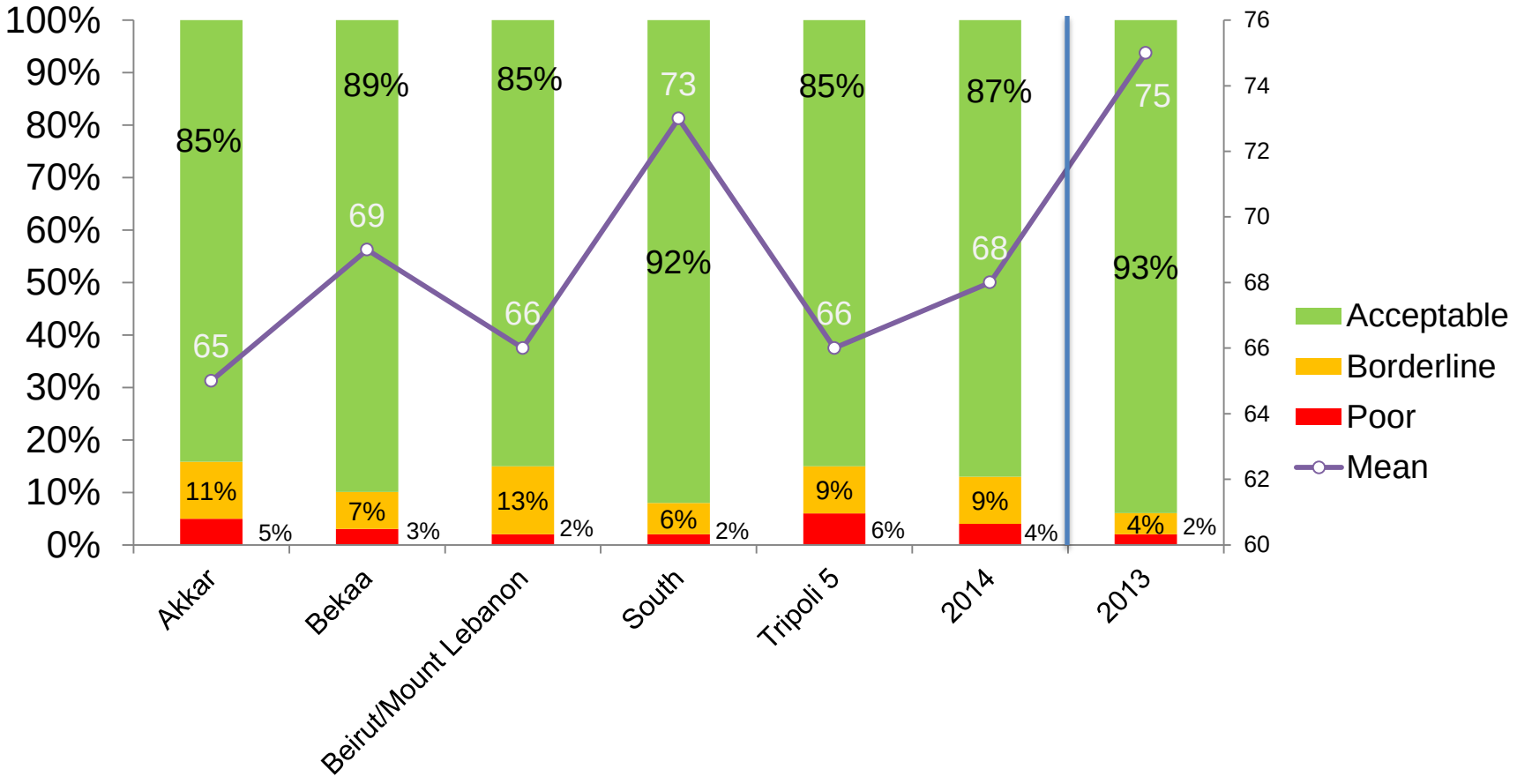

Cereal	Pulse	Fruit	Vegetable	Meat, fish, eggs	Dairy	Sugar	Oil

FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE

Poor	Borderline	Acceptable

Diet diversity
Consumption frequency
Nutrient value

Results: Food Consumption Score



- Most refugee households have acceptable FCS
- Acceptable FCS has decreased between 2013 and 2014

Results: Food Consumption Score

FCS

	2013	2014
Poor	2%	4%
Border line	4%	9%
Acceptable	93%	87%

	2013	2014
Acceptable	57%	34%
Acceptable with coping strategies	36%	53%

- Increase in proportion of HH with poor and border line FCS
- Increase in proportion of households applying food consumption related coping strategies
  - Reduction of portion sizes
  - Reduction in number of meals
  - Less preferred /expensive food
  - Spend days without eating
  - Reduction of adults or females consumption

Results: Diet Diversity

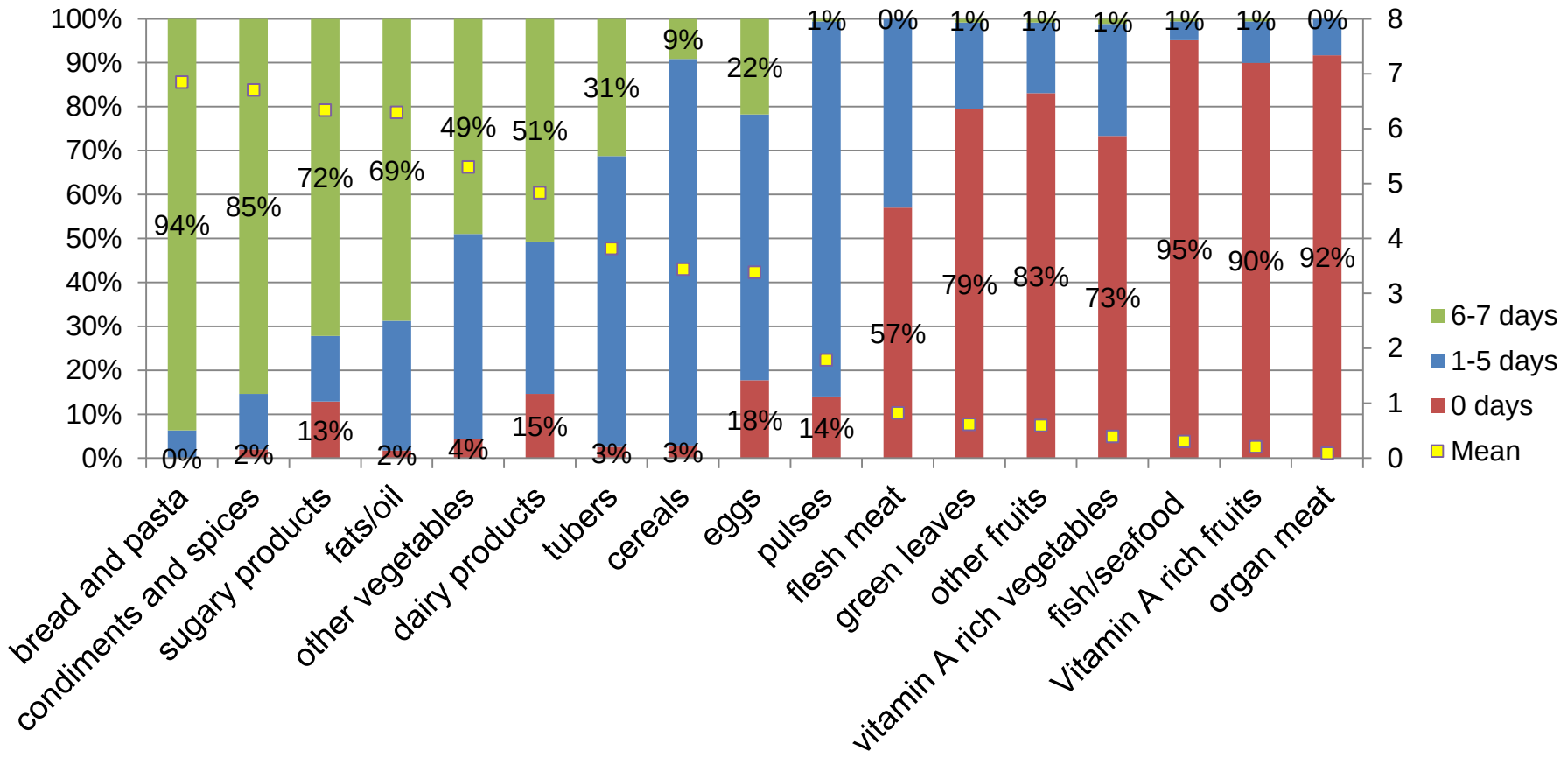
Household Weekly Diet diversity	Mean	≤6	7-8	≥9
2013	9.7	3%	16%	81%
2014	9.4	4%	22%	74%

Household Daily Average Diet Diversity	Mean	≤4.4	4.5-6.4	≥6.5
2013	7.4	1%	19%	80%
2014	6.8	6%	32%	63%

Out of 12 food groups:

- Most refugee households consumed 9 or more food groups per week and 7 or more food groups per day.
- Acceptable diet diversity
- Reduction of diet diversity between 2013 and 2014

Food Consumption Pattern - 2014



Acceptable FCS and diet diversity do not necessary rule out potential micronutrient deficiencies

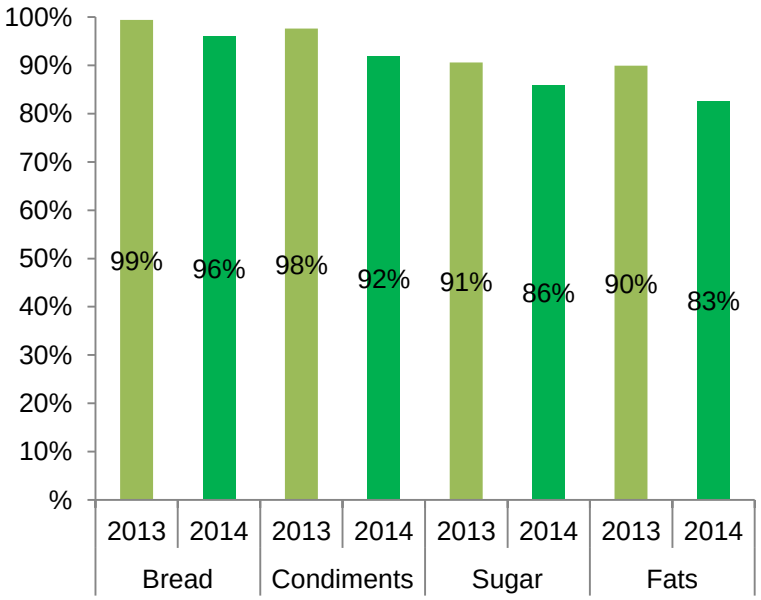
43% did not consume any iron-rich food groups (fish and meat)

Nearly 60% of households did not consume any Vitamin A rich vegetables or fruit

Food Consumption Pattern

Most consumed

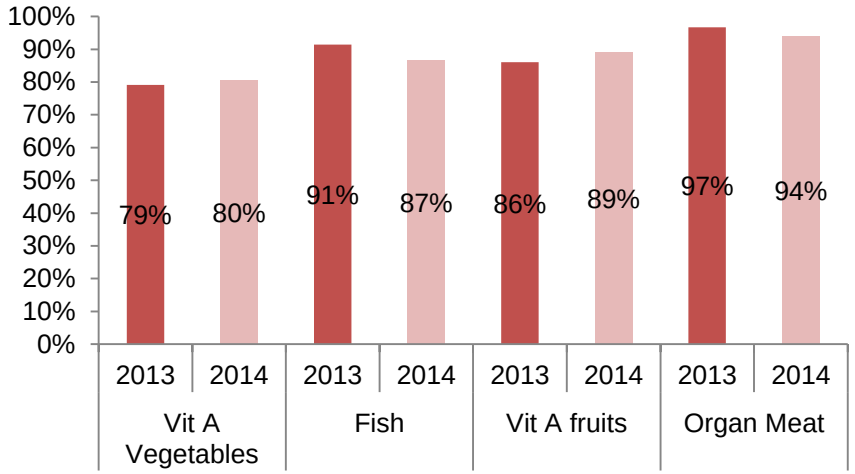
6-7 days



High energy foods
lack micro-nutrients

Least consumed

0 days



High content in micro
nutrients

Conclusions

- Although most refugee households had acceptable food consumption score and diet diversity, the food pattern shows a potential risk of micronutrient deficiencies.
- The high caloric content and low nutritious value of the most consumed food groups together with the risk of micronutrient deficiencies could lead to a double burden of malnutrition.
- A reduction on FCS and diet diversity was observed in 2014 compared to 2013 without significant differences in the general food pattern.
- Following these results WFP developed leaflets as guidance for a balance diet and smart shopping.
- Despite the limitations associated with multi-sectoral emergency assessments, specific analysis can provide useful insights of risk of malnutrition and inform programme design.

Questions?

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Food groups	Weight	Justification
Main staples	2	Energy dense/usually eaten in large quantities, protein content lower and poorer quality (PER less) than legumes, micro-nutrients (bounded by phytates)
Pulses	3	Energy dense, high amounts of protein but of lower quality (PER less) than meats, micro-nutrients (inhibited by phytates), low fat
Vegetables	1	Low energy, low protein, no fat, micro-nutrients
Fruits	1	Low energy, low protein, no fat, micro-nutrients
Meat and fish	4	Highest quality protein, easily absorbable micro-nutrients (no phytates), energy dense, fat. Even when consumed in small quantities, improvement to the quality of diet are large
Milk	4	Highest quality protein, micro-nutrients, vitamin A, energy. However, milk could be consumed only in very small amount and should then be treated as condiment and therefore re-classification in such cases is needed
Sugar	0.5	Empty calories. Usually consumed in small quantities
Oil	0.5	Energy dense but usually no other micro-nutrients. Usually consumed in small quantities
Condiments	0	These foods are by definition eaten in very small quantities and not considered to have an important impact on overall diet.