

# Drivers of Food Choice Among Overweight Women and Children in Malawi

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# Background

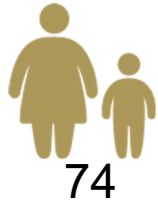
## Malawi

- 21% mothers overweight/obese
- 5% children <5 years overweight/obese



# Study Design (n=274 dyads)

## Type of dyad



Rural (n=37)  
Urban (n=37)



Rural (n=57)  
Urban (n=63)



Rural (n=42)  
Urban (n=38)

## Data collection tools:

- Quantitative food frequency questionnaire
- Drivers questionnaire

## Study sites:

- 8 communities in Lilongwe and Kasungu Districts

# Descriptive Framework

## Structural & Socioeconomic

- *Transport and distance to markets*
- *Amount spent on food*
- *Household food insecurity*
- *Household assets*
- *Household water and toilet facilities*
- *Number of household members*
- *Number of children < 5 y*
- *Mother's age*
- *Mother's education level*
- *Child's age and sex*

## Cognitive

- *Body size preferences*

**COST**

## Food Choice

*Procurement  
Consumption*

- **URBAN/RURAL**
- **SEASON**

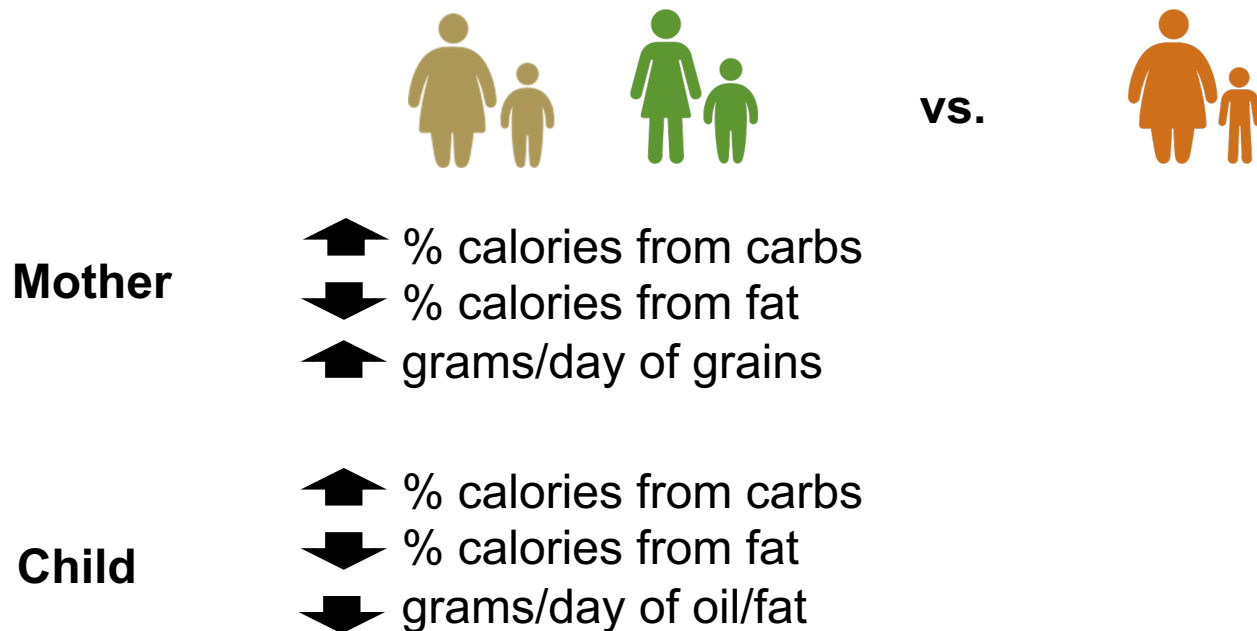
## Gender

- *Who purchases food*
- *Household decision-making (female autonomy score)*

## Taste Preferences

- *Maternal taste preferences*

# Comparison of Dietary Intake of Mothers and Children by Study Arm



# Significant Predictors of Food Group Consumption in Mothers

	Grains	Roots/ Tubers	Legumes/ Nuts	Vegetables	Fruit	Meat/Eggs	Fish	Dairy	Oils/Fats	Snacks	Sweets
Overweight mother, normal weight child vs. both overweight											
Number of household assets											
Household food insecurity access score											
Other family member usually buys food											
Uses transport to get to market vs. walking											
Purchase special foods for children											
Amount spent on special foods for children											
Mother perceives overweight/obese body size as healthy for her child											
Mother's taste preference											

# Significant Predictors of Food Group Consumption in Children

	Grains	Roots/ Tubers	Legumes/ Nuts	Vegetables	Fruit	Meat/Eggs	Fish	Dairy	Oils/Fats	Snacks	Sweets
Child age											
Mother has secondary education or higher											
Kasungu district vs. Lilongwe											
Number of household assets											
Household food insecurity access score											
Amount spent on food weekly											
Both parents usually buy food											
Purchase special foods for children											
Mother perceives overweight/obese body size as healthy for child											
Mother prefers obese body size for herself											
Mother's taste preference											

# Conclusions

Key drivers of food choice were:

- Socioeconomic factors
- Body size preferences
- Taste preferences

Recommendations:

- Government of Malawi can use these findings to develop food policies or nutrition programs to emphasize factors positively associated with consumption of healthy food groups



## Funding



Drivers of Food Choice

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BILL & MELINDA  
GATES foundation



## Disclosures

No conflicts to disclose.

## Study Team

