INTRODUCTION
Rice is a major staple among two-thirds of the world’s population. In the United States, other than crude disappearance data, little is known about rice consumption patterns and the nutritional contribution that rice provides to the diet. Using existing nutrition monitoring tools to obtain a representative sample of the U.S. population, this study set out to analyze the nutritional contribution of rice in the U.S. diet and to distinguish unique dietary patterns and diet quality among rice consumers.

OBJECTIVES
To examine rice consumption patterns among a population-wide representative sample of U.S. adults and children over age two, and to assess measures of nutrient intake and dietary patterns of rice consumers versus non-consumers.

STUDY DESIGN
Utilizing the 1994-96 CSFII and 2001-2002 NHANES and the food commodity intake databases, individuals who reported consuming at least half a serving of white or brown rice were identified. All statistical tests were done using WESVAR 4.2. CSFII 1994-96 data were analyzed using Linux SAS version 9.1, NHANES 2001-2002 data were analyzed using SAS version 9.00. The total diets of individuals reporting eating rice were compared to non-rice consumers.

RESULTS
Rice is consumed by a significant portion of the U.S. adult population, with nearly 28% of consumers reporting eating at least half a serving of white or brown rice in two days (CSFII), and over 17% consuming that amount in one day of observed intake (CSFII and NHANES). Several differences in total diet intake were observed. Compared to non-consumers of rice, individuals who eat rice (white or brown) consume:

– Less fat, saturated fat and added sugars;
– A smaller percentage of calories per day from fat and saturated fat;
– More fiber, dietary folate, fruit, vegetables and enriched grains;
– Are more likely to have BMI values under 30.

CONCLUSIONS
Rice provides positive nutrition contributions to individuals’ diets and may improve overall diet quality. Consumers eating rice may be more likely to eat a diet consistent with the 2005 U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

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