

Title: A Mixed Method Exploration into First-Generation College Student Awareness of and Barriers to Nutrition Services

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Objectives: First-generation college students are more likely than other students to face food insecurity (Forman et al., 2018). Many first-generation college students' socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., race and gender) compound food insecurity risk (Regan, 2020). Food insecurity needs to be addressed to ensure equal opportunity for all students, as food-insecure students are at greater risk of suffering from stress, disordered eating, and poor sleep quality than their relatively more food-secure peers (El Zein et al., 2019), which in turn leads to disproportionate academic and health outcomes (Mukigi et al., 2018). This study aims to fill the gap in the literature by exploring how first-generation college students experience, navigate, and perceive food insecurity and food assistance resources.

Design, Methods, and Instruments: Using a mixed-methods approach, we will interview first-generation college students at a large public university to establish their knowledge and perceptions of campus food insecurity, and their needs and use of available food assistance resources. Building on information from the interviews, we will develop a campus wide survey to examine awareness of and prevalence of food insecurity, explore the usage of, barriers to, and campus facilitators for food assistance resources, identify additional factors that exacerbate food insecurity, and highlight its effects on academic and health outcomes.

Results: Data under analysis.

Conclusions: Campus administrators and other stakeholders will be able to draw upon the findings to develop effective awareness strategies and improve food security, therefore facilitating positive effects on academic performance and health on college campuses.

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