

Prevalence of food insecurity among college students at a southeastern university

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Objective: The purpose of this study is to assess the prevalence of food insecurity among college students at a southeastern university. Previous food security studies have not been conducted on college campuses in the southeastern United States. Results from this study will determine whether preventative measures should be implemented on campus.

Design: Cross-sectional design.

Participants: A total of 629 undergraduate and graduate students participated in the research study.

Main Outcome Measures: Food security status and sociodemographic data were included such as age, race and gender.

Methods: Researchers analyzed responses from the survey. Frequencies were calculated for the HFSS questions and sociodemographic data using SPSS software. Frequencies for food security status were calculated manually.

Results: Data was collected from 629 students (N= 629; 73.4% female, 16.2% male, mean age: 21.2 years + 4.4 years). 304 students (48.3%) were classified as food insecure and 325 (51.6%) were classified as food secure. There were significant relationships ($p < 0.05$) between food security status and sociodemographic factors including living on or off-campus, employment status, and race. Students at higher risk of being food insecure were those who reported living off-campus and those who reported full-time or part-time employment. Those identifying themselves as Black, Hispanic, and Asian were also at increased risk of food insecurity.

Conclusions: The survey found that food insecurity is a significant problem among college students at this university. These findings are consistent with previous research. Future research should be conducted, especially in universities that have large populations of at-risk students.