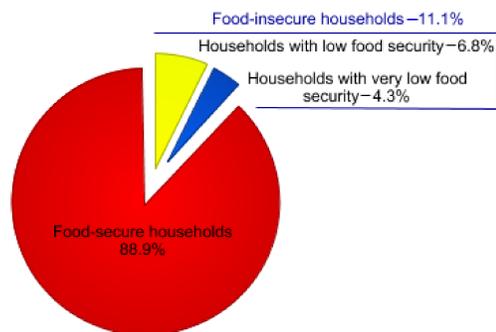


The Impact of Food Insecurity on College Students

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Introduction

U.S. households by food security status, 2018



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, using data from the December 2018 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Food insecurity is defined as the limited availability of nutritionally appropriate or safe foods or the inability to acquire these foods

External factors like anxiety over finances or where the next meal is coming can have unknown implications on college completion. So far there is no consensus on the severity of food insecurity on college campuses, in fact **no valid measuring tool exists** to assess it.

That is why this review will explore the current literature of **food insecurity on college campuses and the implications it might have on students.**

Coverage

Search Criteria: Research was gathered from PubMed, Google Scholar, the Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics, and databases in partner with the Tennessee Technological University.

Key terms: Included “Food insecurity and college students”, “Food insecurity and college campus”, “Food insecurity and college tuition”, and “Food insecurity and socioeconomic status”.

Methodology

A literature review is a collection of peer-reviewed research on a specific topic, in order to gain an overview of current theories. This review focused specifically on food insecurity on college campuses. Data for 8 sources was collected, evaluated, and analyzed in this review.

- **Inclusions:** Peer-reviewed articles from journals that had been published within the past 10 years. Only original research were included.
- **Exclusions:** Articles that were not available in full text versions, if the article was not in English, or if the data was not available.

Significance

The food insecurity map provided by Feeding America data shows that **934,310** (13.9%) people in the state of Tennessee are food insecure.

Food security and socioeconomic status of a household are intersectional with the **performance of students attending college**

Results

Academic Performance:

- All three articles cited in this section, concluded that **low levels of food security are negatively associated with GPA.**

Behavioral Characteristics:

- Students who worked full-time, or lived off-campus without parents, or received SNAP benefits had **higher odds of food insecurity.**
- Food insecurity was found to be linked with **depression and anxiety.**
- Food insecure freshmen are **three times more likely** to report anxiety and depression compared to their peers.
- Students who lived off-campus also reported a higher rate of food insecurity than their peers.

Financial Status:

- Students that were **financially independent** exhibited higher rates of food insecurity, while those that used a **credit card had a lower risk.**
- Students who **use food assistance programs** and who owed at least **\$10,000 in financial aid** were most likely to be food insecure

Conclusion

From the articles included in this research, the rates of food insecurity can be estimated between **8.91% and 38.4%** of the college population. This research in particular indicated three areas in which food insecurity effects college students: their **academic performance, behavioral characteristics, and financial status.**

There are many steps that administrators can take to identify food insecurity on their campus, and ensure they have the tools they need to succeed. By identifying the many risk factors of food insecurity, interventions and programs can be developed with any one of them in mind.

Larger, nationwide research studies would need to be conducted on college campuses to develop a comprehensive understanding on the total degree of food insecurity in the United States.



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Frequency of Students Who Experience Food Insecurity

