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27th Annual Research Day

May 4th, 12:00 AM

Language Barrier Contributions to Food Insecurity in Spanish-Speaking Populations

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Khan, Amin; Kumar, Leeza; Kilic, Edanur; and Acheampong, Stephen, "Language Barrier Contributions to Food Insecurity in Spanish-Speaking Populations" (2023). *Stratford Campus Research Day*. 61.
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Language Barrier Contributions to Food Insecurity in Spanish-Speaking Populations

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Background

- Food insecurity is defined as “household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food.”¹
- Those who live in low-income neighborhoods in rural areas and do not have access to full grocery stores are dependent upon convenience stores where there are fewer options, high prices, and unhealthy food options.^{2,3}
- According to a study published in Health Affairs, food insecurity is linked to “increased risks of some birth defects, anemia, lower nutrient intakes, cognitive problems, and aggression and anxiety.”⁴
- Diabetes, obesity, heart disease, mental health disorders, and other chronic health conditions are associated with food insecurity and a lack of affordable nutritious food.⁴

Objective

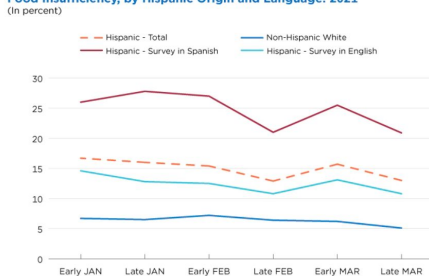
- Examine how language barriers cause food insecurity in Spanish-speaking communities.
- Propose an intervention to combat food insecurity in Spanish-speaking populations in southern New Jersey.

Methods

- The research for our project was conducted through Google, Google Scholar, and PubMed.
- Keywords included “health disparities,” “Spanish-speaking,” and “food insecurity.”

Results

Food Insecurity, by Hispanic Origin and Language: 2021
(In percent)



Note: The dotted line represents all Hispanics, regardless of the language in which they chose to answer the survey. Hispanics can be of any race.
Source: Household Pulse Survey, Weeks 22-27.

Figure 1. This data from the United States Census Bureau compares food insecurity in Spanish-speaking and English-speaking populations.⁵

- Approximately 17% of all Latino Americans were food insecure as of 2021.⁶
- 1 in 6 Hispanic individuals experienced food insecurity.⁶
- A higher percentage of Latino (16.2%) and Black (19.8%) households experienced food insecurity than White households (7%).⁷
- Almost one-third of SNAP recipients use another person’s car, take public transportation, walk, or bike for their grocery shopping. Limited public transportation makes it difficult for many food-insecure Spanish-speakers to utilize food distribution sites.⁸

References

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Conclusion

- Compared to white non-Hispanic communities, Latino communities face unique challenges and are more likely to be hungry.
- Language barriers often prohibit communities in high need from being aware of available resources to combat food insecurity.
- With a greater predisposition to food insecurity, it is imperative to develop an intervention for Spanish-speaking populations.

- Limited public transportation makes it difficult for many food-insecure Spanish-speakers to utilize food distribution sites.

Proposed Interventions

- Create a user-friendly website providing information on food distribution centers
 - Include information regarding:
 - Distance from Buena Township
 - Operating hours
 - Contact information
 - Transportation assistance
 - Pinned locations of food distribution centers within a 15 mile radius of Buena Township on a virtual map
- Volunteer with Shore AHEC: Spanish Community Center
 - Distribute fliers with information on food distribution centers