P190 Examining School-day Dietary Practices: Associations with Student Characteristics and School Food Environment Exposures

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Objective: To examine individual and school-level determinants of school-day dietary practices among grade 5 to 8 students.

Theory, Prior Research, Rationale: School-based approaches to improving dietary practices often focus on individuals and fail to consider the role of environments in shaping diet. Research which examines whether school environments impact the school-day dietary practices of youth is needed.

Study Design, Setting, Participants, and Intervention: Participants for this cross-sectional study included 950 youth (mean age 12.5 years; 48.6% Female) from 26 Vancouver, BC schools. Student-level data was collected through an online survey and were combined with school and neighborhood-level datasets.

Outcome, Measures and Analysis: Outcome measures included daily intake of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSB), packaged snacks, and energy-dense processed foods, along with weekly food purchases from limited service locations off-campus. Multi-level logistic regression analyses were run. Missing values on independent variables were multiply imputed using chained equations.

Results: After controlling for individual characteristics (i.e., gender, acculturation, food security, bringing lunch from home and spending money), only daily SSB intake and weekly off-campus food purchasing varied significantly between schools. Final full models indicate that boys were more likely than girls to consume energy-dense processed foods and SSBs, as were food insecure youth. Secondary students had higher odds of consuming energy-dense processed foods and purchasing food off-campus. Students who brought lunch from home had higher odds of consuming packaged snacks but lower odds of purchasing food off-campus.

Conclusions and Implications: Despite between-school variability for two dietary outcomes, school-level variables (i.e., food outlet density and closest distance) were not significant predictors. Future research should examine other contextual factors that may influence the school-day dietary practices of youth.

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P191 Food Pantry Focus Groups to Identify Nutrition Education Needs

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Objective: Identify the awareness of the existing nutrition education program and the perceived benefits and barriers to eating more healthfully among food pantry clients.

Theory, Prior Research, Rationale: Previous research identified the need for nutrition education development to be guided by client focus groups. Targeting perceived benefits and barriers of eating healthfully along with self-efficacy in feeding families more healthfully has also been shown to guide program development.

Study Design, Setting, Participants, and Intervention: Focus groups with a convenience sample totaling 32 English and Spanish speaking pantry clients.

Outcome, Measures and Analysis: Focus group questions addressed perceived benefits and barriers to eating more healthfully, level of self-efficacy related to eating healthfully, level of awareness of the pantry's existing nutrition education program, and interest in nutrition education programs at the pantry. The results were analyzed using Richard Krueger's analysis strategy.

Results: The most common perceived benefit for eating more healthfully was disease prevention while the perceived barrier was cost. Particularly that organic foods were "healthy foods," yet expensive. Another barrier was kids being "picky eaters," specifically not eating vegetables and whole grains. The level of self-efficacy in providing healthy foods for families varied greatly among clients. There was very low awareness of the current nutrition education program. Providing recipes and nutrition tips in the pantry waiting area about how to prepare, cook, and store vegetables was the most common suggestion for nutrition education.

Conclusions and Implications: Perceived benefits and barriers to healthy eating potentially influence clients' behavior. Making nutrition education convenient regarding preparing, cooking, and storing vegetables appears to be a topic of interest among pantry clients.

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