P45 (continued)

Study Design, Setting, Participants: Computer-aided telephone interviews were collected (in February 2020) in a random, representative sample of Vermont residents ($n = 574$).

Measurable Outcomes/Analysis: Respondents were asked about their use of food labels, including whether they used organic and/or natural food labels when evaluating food products. Associations between use of each type of food label and demographic variables (age, gender, income, education, having children in the household) were compared using chi-squares, and logistic regression ($P < 0.01$).

Results: Most respondents indicated that they did use organic (70% of respondents) or natural (64% of respondents) labels when evaluating food products. Use of organic food labels was significantly higher among parents with children in the home (78%), women (77%), and those with a college degree or higher (75%). In contrast, use of natural labels was negatively associated with income, with the highest use (79%) seen in the lowest income category ($< \$25,000/\text{yr}$).

Conclusion: The increasing use of unregulated marketing statements on packaged foods (including “natural,” “raw” and “minimally processed”) could be distracting consumers from using more regulated food labels, especially consumers with limited education or income. Nutrition education programs and federal labeling policies are needed to support consumer use of labels, and to prevent low-income consumers from potentially being deceived by unregulated food labels.

Funding: None.

P46 Farm to School Program Prevalence: Do School Characteristics Matter?

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Background: Farm to School programs (FTSP) have been promoted as part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA) to improve school children’s access of nutritious, local food.

Objective: We investigate the prevalence of FTSP in K-12 schools before and after the implementation of the HHFKA. We also examine differences in prevalence of FTSP by school-level (elementary vs middle/high school), proportion of students enrolled from various race/ethnicity groups and proportion of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals (FRPM).

Study Design, Setting, Participants: A secondary analysis of data collected between 2010–2017 from 148 schools participating in the New Jersey Child Health Study (NJCHS) was analyzed. Schools were located in 4 low-income high minority cities in NJ: Camden, New Brunswick, Newark, and Trenton.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: Schools’ personnel answered surveys at 3 time points between 2010-2017 and reported on their schools’ participation in the FTSP for the year of the survey and the previous year. Bivariate and

multivariate analyses were conducted to examine FTSP prevalence rates for each year of data collection and for time periods categorized as before and after the implementation of the HHFKA. Differences in prevalence rates were compared by school characteristics.

Results: Across all years, on average significantly ($P < 0.001$) more elementary schools (21%) participated in the FTSP compared to middle/high schools (8%). Based on multivariate logistic regression analysis, compared to 2010, the odds of FTSP participation were 4-5 times higher in 2016 ($P = 0.008$) and 2017 ($P = 0.003$). Adjusted estimates show that across K-12 schools, participation increased from 7% in 2010 to 26% and 27% in 2016 and 2017, respectively. No differences were observed in FTSP participation by other school demographics.

Conclusion: Elementary schools are more likely to participate in FTSP and rates of participation in the program across K-12 schools have increased significantly in recent years.

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P47 Healthy Meal Kit Program Improved Long-term Food Security Status for African American Families with Low Income

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Background: Food insecurity is a serious issue in the US, with 10.5% of households experiencing food insecurity in 2019. Food insecurity rates are higher among households with children and those with low income as well as among racial/ethnic minorities. Creative approaches to improving food security status (FSS) are needed. Meal kits have become a popular service for households with higher income and may help improve food access and FSS for households with low income if they are affordable.

Objective: To assess the impact of a healthy meal kit program on long-term FSS of African American families with low income.

Study Design, Setting, Participants: A 6-week pilot study was conducted with African American participants with low income ($n = 36$). Participants were given meal kits, recipe cards, cooking tools, and nutrition handouts. Data were collected at baseline and at long term follow up 6 months post-intervention (LTFU).

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: Sociodemographic characteristics were collected with a demographic survey and computed using descriptive statistics. FSS was characterized with the U.S. Household Food Security Survey Module, and a paired-samples t test was used to determine whether there was a difference between FSS at baseline and LTFU.

P47 (continued)

Results: Participants were on average 44.1 ± 13.6 years of age, had a household size of 4.2 ± 2.0 , were primarily female (90.0%), had an annual household income $<\$35,000$ (75.9%), completed $\leq$ some college (76.7%), and had food insecurity (70.0%). Food security raw score decreased significantly from baseline to LTFU (6.1 ± 4.8 vs 2.6 ± 3.9 , respectively; $P = 0.001$), indicating an improvement in FSS.

Conclusion: Findings suggest the meal kit program helped improve FSS over the long-term, but results should be interpreted with caution due to the lack of a control group. Participants may have learned food resource management strategies to make better use of food dollars. Future interventions should explore the mechanism behind this improvement.

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P48 Preliminary Analysis from Statewide Stakeholder Interviews Around the Impact of Food Access During COVID-19

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Background: During the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly 24 million adults reported that their households sometimes or often lacked sufficient food in the last 7 days, with Black and Latino adults approximately 3 times as likely as White adults to report food insecurity.

Objective: The objective of this study was to assess the impact COVID-19 on food access in Rhode Island (RI), document challenges encountered, and identify promising practices and policy solutions by conducting individual, 1-hour key stakeholder interviews from September–November 2020.

Study Design, Settings, Participants: Virtual qualitative interviews ($n = 25$) were conducted with 33 key stakeholders from 25 community organizations located throughout RI. This includes state/city agencies ($n = 9$), nonprofit organizations ($n = 5$), Health Equity Zone representatives ($n = 5$), food pantries/food bank ($n = 4$), a home-delivered meal program ($n = 1$), and a FQHC ($n = 1$) that primarily serve low-income and racial/ethnic minority populations.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: A structured interview guide was developed to capture scope of work, successes and challenges, and impact on health disparities including how organizations adjusted during COVID-19 to provide access to food safely. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and thematically coded in NVivo with a priori codes to guide the analysis. An inductive and deductive approach was used to identify themes.

Results: Preliminary findings suggest that organizations struggled to meet food needs due to unemployment, lack of culturally relevant foods, insufficient resources (ie, funding, personal protective equipment, technology), and exacerbation of existing food access challenges connected to transportation and food storage needs. Despite these challenges, reported successes included enhanced collaboration between new and existing partnerships among stakeholders, increased effective communication among community stakeholders and the populations they serve, and increases in new initiatives to support food access needs.

Conclusion: Our findings highlight the need to ensure a coordinated response through strategic leadership that has a focus on vulnerable racial/ethnic populations to ensure access to culturally appropriate food during emergency situations.

Funding: None.

P49 Registered Dietitian Nutritionists' Perceptions of Helping Mothers Gain Sustainable Access to Healthy Foods

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Background: Food insecurity in households with children headed by single mothers is higher than the national average. Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) can play a vital role in helping mothers gain sustainable access to healthy foods.

Objective: To examine RDN perceptions of helping mothers gain sustainable access to healthy foods and assess their awareness of nutrition assistance programs.

Study Design, Setting, Participants: Quantitative, cross-sectional online survey analytically framed by the Community Readiness Model. A convenience sample of 533 RDNs licensed in North Carolina was recruited using the North Carolina Board of Nutrition's public database.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: RDNs answered demographic questions prior to the survey. The survey asked participants to rate their perception of the importance of helping food insecure mothers and if they felt helping was within their scope of practice. Participants were also asked about their awareness of nutrition assistance programs. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, the Mann-Whitney U test, and Spearman's correlation; $P < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

Results: Participants were mostly White women (90%). Ninety-eight percent of all RDNs perceived helping mothers with food access as important. RDNs who perceived helping as important felt helping is never out of their scope of practice; $U = 660$, $P < 0.05$. Perceived importance was inversely associated with scope of practice; $rs(531) =$

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