P032 (continued)

**Design, Setting, and Participants:** Semi-structured phone interviews were conducted with 20 Somali refugees (19 females, and 1 male) in Utah who self-identified as food gatekeepers for their families and had lived in Utah for < 5 years. Interview questions were revised after review by an expert panel. Questions assessed barriers and assets for healthy eating and preferences of approaches for nutrition education. Interviews were conducted in Somali.

**Measurable Outcome/Analysis:** Audio recordings of interviews were translated to English, transcribed, and uploaded into NVivo for storage and organization. A multi-step process by two independent researchers was used to code and analyze the data, and identify codes and themes.

**Results:** Barriers to healthy eating included: availability of ingredients and equipment needed for cooking; accessibility of food, transportation, finding items in grocery stores, language barriers; affordability of food and budgeting. Assets included enjoyment of cooking, including children in food preparation, and social support. Preferences for nutrition education included group education with a Somali instructor from a professional background. Content of interest included food safety, cooking American foods, and child nutrition.

**Conclusions:** Identifying and addressing specific assets and barriers and using an educator from the target culture may improve the effectiveness of nutrition education targeted to Somali refugee populations.

**Funding:** None

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P033 Changes in Eating Habits Among Eating Competent and Non-Eating Competent College Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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**Background:** Recent quantitative studies have illuminated dietary- and lifestyle-related changes that students experienced during global coronavirus lockdowns. Limited qualitative research on the US undergraduate student population has been published on this topic.

**Objective:** The study aimed to describe eating-related behavior changes reported by US undergraduate students during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a secondary aim, this study described behavior changes among students who were and were not Eating Competent (EC).

**Study Design, Setting, Participants:** This was a secondary analysis of data collected from an online survey administered from October through December 2020 to students at a major northwestern public university. The original survey consisted of previously validated and/or published instruments, including the Satter Eating Competence Inventory (ecSI 2.0™). Using a direct content analysis approach, this study coded respondents’ answers to the open-ended question “In what ways have your eating habits changed since the US coronavirus outbreak?”

**Measurable Outcome/Analysis:** Codes were written and classified under the four dimensions of Eating Competence: Eating Attitudes, Food Acceptance, Internal Regulation, and Contextual Skills. Other codes were developed to represent responses that did not fit within these dimensions. Respondents were categorized as EC or not EC based on their ecSI 2.0™ scores.

**Results:** Responses from 1,529 participants were analyzed. Preliminary findings indicate that EC university students more frequently reported behavior changes like eating more fruits and vegetables and more home-cooked meals than non-EC students. Non-EC students more often reported eating more takeout, more processed foods, and more sugar compared to EC students. Mental-health-related changes, eating less regularly, disordered eating, and weight concerns were more commonly reported by non-EC students.

**Conclusions:** Compared to non-EC students, EC students reported more health-promoting behavior changes during the pandemic. This study highlights the potential benefit of teaching EC-related strategies to the US undergraduate student population and further elucidates behavior changes among students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Funding:** None

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P034 Connecting Kindergarten Readiness and Food-Based Learning in the Head Start Preschool Classroom

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**Background:** While food-based learning (FBL) has been cited as the most effective way to increase children’s preference and consumption of vegetables in the preschool classroom, teachers face barriers such as limited time or competing priorities. Integration of FBL with other learning domains is one promising solution; however, research is needed to understand teachers’ use and perception of integrative FBL experiences.

**Objective:** Explore common experiences of Head Start (HS) teachers’ use and integration of FBL with science learning activities in a preschool HS classroom.

**Study Design, Setting, Participants:** Thirty-five in-depth semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted on page S34
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ducted with HS teachers from 16 counties across the three regions of North Carolina. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

**Measurable Outcome/Analysis:** Phenomenology was used to guide study design/analysis. Researchers identified significant statements through open coding which were grouped into themes. Interrelated themes were condensed and presented in a model depicting the “what” and “how” of teachers’ experiences.

**Results:** Participants were 94% female, 40.8 years (SD 10.06), and predominantly White (52.9%) and Black/African American (44.1%). Researchers identified 5 primary themes: (1) How Teachers integrate FBL; (2) Perceptions of Successful FBL; (3) Motivators; (4) Barriers; and (5) Connection to Kindergarten Readiness. Teachers described most frequently utilizing FBL during mealtimes. However, when FBL occurred outside of mealtime, unhealthy foods were often used. Teachers stated they felt successful when children were engaged and willing to try a new food. Teachers reported several motivators (e.g., improving health) and barriers (e.g., food waste) to integrating FBL. Some teachers saw a connection between FBL and kindergarten readiness while others did not.

**Conclusions:** Teachers are trying to engage children in FBL but may need additional training focused on FBL best practices, as well as resources to improve FBL integration in ways that promote kindergarten readiness.

**Funding:** NIH Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA)

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**P035 COVID-19’s Impact on Head Start Teachers’ Relationships, Health Behaviors, and Stress Levels**

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**Background:** Early care and education (ECE) workers experience physical and mental barriers to health. The novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) worsened ECE workers’ physical health, emotional stress, and financial burdens. These measures of well-being are important as they have also been linked to ECE workers’ relationship with children in their classrooms.

**Objective:** Examine the impact of COVID-19 on the well-being of North Carolina (NC) Head Start (HS) teachers with an emphasis on their personal/professional relationships, personal health behaviors, and stressors.

**Study Design, Setting, Participants:** A cross-sectional convenience sample of NC HS teachers were recruited to participate in the study. Data were collected from teachers across all three regions of North Carolina September 2020-March 2021 using an online 27-item survey.

**Measurable Outcome/Analysis:** Researchers analyzed demographic information and quantitative survey data using basic descriptive statistics. Two researchers coded participants’ open-ended responses using basic thematic analysis.

**Results:** Survey respondents (n = 88) were predominantly female (97.6%), Black/African American (46.6%) or White (43.2%), with an average age of 43 years old. Teachers reported increased challenges to maintaining relationships with coworkers (57.9%), children in their classrooms (84.4%), and the children’s families (81.1%). Half (50.6%) reported COVID-19 impacted their health. Over 70% indicated COVID-19 made physical activity challenging, 61.5% experienced weight gain, and 59% increased their snacking. Teachers expressed an increase in six psychological distress indicators; nervousness (88.9%), hopelessness (54.3%), restlessness (72.4%), sadness (50.6%), everything is an effort (58.4%) and worthlessness (31.2%).

**Conclusions:** Survey results furthered the understanding of COVID-19’s effects on HS teacher health. In a workforce overburdened with stress, COVID-19 compounded and created barriers to wellness. Future research should explore avenues to reduce health barriers for all ECE workers during the ongoing pandemic.

**Funding:** NIH

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**P036 Cultural Appropriateness and Foods Consumed by Clients Receiving a Food Box from a Children’s Hospital Food Pharm Program**

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**Background:** A Midwestern children’s hospital in a metropolitan city provided healthy food boxes to families screened as food insecure from July 2021-February 2022. The food boxes provided sufficient food to feed a family of four for three days. However, as with much of emergency food, the cultural appropriateness of the food provided and the amount of food consumed by the receiving families is unknown.

**Objective:** Therefore, the purpose of this research study was to determine the cultural appropriateness of food provided and the amount of food consumed from the food box.

**Study Design, Setting, Participants:** This was a cross-sectional study. A total of 46 families who had received a Food Box from a Children’s Hospital Food Pharm Program were interviewed for this study.

**Funding:** NIH

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