P072 (continued)

Seminated among student financial aid and student support services.

**Conclusions:** Universities can generate a Nutrition Security Plan for students by building an interdisciplinary team, reviewing the current services on campus reviewing the literature and services offered at other universities to generate ideas, then working together to expand successful existing programs and proposing promising interventions.

**Funding:** Center for Disease Control and Prevention

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**P073 Diet Quality and Ultra-processed Food Consumption Before and After a Virtual Nutrition Intervention for Adolescents with ASD**

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**Background:** Adolescents with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are more likely to have limited food repertoire and may consume more energy-dense foods than their neurotypical counterparts. Nutrition interventions may improve diet quality of adolescents with ASD by decreasing ultra-processed food (UPF) intake and increasing minimally processed food (MPF) intake.

**Objective:** To assess whether UPF intake and diet quality in adolescents with ASD changed after an 8-week virtual nutrition education intervention.

**Study Design, Setting, Participants:** This is a second-ary analysis of data collected from a pre-post intervention study with 22 adolescents with ASD aged 12-21 years. The intervention consisted of eight weekly sessions based on social cognitive theory.

**Measurable Outcome/Analysis:** The Block Kids Food Frequency Questionnaire was completed by each adolescent at pre-/post-intervention. Dietary data were coded based on NOVA food processing classifications to determine daily servings of UPF and MPF. The Healthy Eating Index-2015 (HEI-2015) was calculated to assess diet quality. Participants were categorized into high/low UPF/MPF based on NOVA food processing classifications to determine ultra-processed food (UPF) intake and health index (HEI) score (an indicator of overall dietary quality) and amounts of food groups (whole fruit, vegetables) were computed. Mixed effect models were used to evaluate transition and pandemic effects, including two-way interaction terms (pandemic X grade) to assess whether the pandemic moderated the impact of the transition on adolescents’ diet remains unknown.

**Objectives:** This study examined how adolescents’ diet changed as a result of the transition from elementary to secondary school, and explored whether the pandemic moderated these changes.

**Study Design, Setting, Participants:** This longitudinal study took place between 2018–2021. A total of 669 adolescents completed online 24-hour dietary recalls (ASA24) during elementary school (grade 7), and again in secondary school (grade 8). The first cohort (~42% of the sample) had both grade 7 and 8 data collected prior to the start of the pandemic (hence, the pre-pandemic cohort). The second cohort had both grade 7 and 8 data collected during the pandemic (the pandemic cohort).

**Measurable Outcome/Analysis:** The Total Healthy Eating Index (HEI) score (an indicator of overall dietary quality) and amounts of food groups (whole fruit, vegetables) were computed. Mixed effect models were used to evaluate transition and pandemic effects, including two-way interaction terms (pandemic X grade) to assess whether the pandemic moderated the impact of the transition on adolescents’ diet.

**Results:** Dietary behavior deteriorated as a result of the transition to secondary school, with lower intakes of whole fruit (P = 0.005) and lower HEI scores (P = 0.023). We also found significant pandemic effects regardless of the adolescents’ school year, with the pre-pandemic cohort reporting higher servings of both whole fruit (P = 0.012) and vegetables (P = 0.013) on weekdays compared

**Conclusions:** Further research is needed to investigate the relationships between food processing categories and diet quality. Future virtual nutrition interventions for this population may emphasize strategies to reduce energy-dense UPF and increase MPF.

**Funding:** University of South Florida College of Public Health

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P075 Differences in Diet Quality and College Students’ Health-Related Quality of Life

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Background: Health-related quality of life (HRQOL) describes one’s overall perception of well-being. Research has shown the impact of fruit and vegetable intake on HRQOL among college students, but the relationship between diet quality and HRQOL is unclear.

Objective: The objective was to assess the influence of diet quality on HRQOL among college students.

Study Design, Setting, Participants: A cross-sectional convenience sample of undergraduate students completed an online survey to capture health behaviors.

Measurable Outcomes/Analysis: Diet quality was measured using the short Healthy Eating Index (sHEI). HRQOL was assessed using the Center for Disease Control’s Healthy Days modules. A MANOVA was used to assess group differences in HRQOL between students who scored above average sHEI and students who scored the average sHEI and below.

Results: The sample (n = 753) was mostly White (87.7%), female (69.8%), and an average of 20.90 ± 2.34 y/o. Average sHEI was 48.99 ± 10.37, indicating poor diet quality. On average, students reported 4.05 ± 6.31 days per month (d/m) with poor mental health, 11.81 ± 9.20 d/m with poor physical health, and 9.99 ± 8.00 d/m feeling healthy and full of energy. There was a significant difference in HRQOL between those who had above average sHEI and those who scored the average and below (F (3,711) = 6.19, P < 0.001, Wilk’s Λ = .98, partial η 2 = .025). Students who had above average sHEI (51.3%) reported significantly more d/m feeling healthy and full of energy (11.27 ± 8.41 vs. 8.78 ± 7.4, p < 0.001) and less d/m with poor mental health (10.78 ± 8.91 vs. 12.69 ± 9.37, P < 0.01) compared to students who scored average and below. There were no significant difference for d/m with poor physical health.

Conclusions: Diet quality significantly differed in college students’ HRQOL. These findings provide justification for wellness-aimed interventions that address college-specific barriers of diet quality to improve HRQOL.

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P076 Eating and Weight Behaviors Among Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Weight Concerns: Parents’ Perspectives.

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Background: According to 2018 CDC data, approximately 1 in 44 children have Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs). Children with ASDs have an increased propensity towards overweight and obesity due to limited diets and physical inactivity. High-quality research interventions to address obesity in this population are limited, and none have been informed by an intentional process to understand parent stresses and barriers to change surrounding meals and eating behaviors.

Objective: This qualitative study aimed to explore parents’ perceptions of their autistic children's eating behaviors, weight, and the support they need from healthcare providers to improve their children’s weight status.

Study Design, Setting, Participants: Participants in this study were recruited using criterion sampling from Texas. Semi-structured Zoom interviews were conducted with 10 parents of overweight/obese autistic children between the ages of 6-12 years.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim using NVivo Pro 12.0. Two trained coders independently analyzed transcripts using an open-coding and consensus-building approach for thematic analysis.

Results: Seven themes were identified: (1) Child’s eating attitudes and behaviors; (2) Factors influencing child’s nutrition knowledge and skills; (3) Meal planning and preparation; (4) Parental attitudes and experiences toward feeding; (5) Parental attitudes towards child’s weight; (6) Parental distress; and (7) Possible Interventions. All parents reported feeding-related stress and many expressed feelings of helplessness to improve these behaviors. Parents also shared concerns related to behavioral regressions due to the COVID-19 pandemic that affected their child’s ongoing therapies. A multidisciplinary approach targeting individualized nutrition and feeding advice for their children was desired. A range of in-person and online interventions including cooking classes and parental vlogs was recommended.

Conclusions: This study supports the need for nutrition education for parents caring for autistic children and access to evidence-based, individualized approaches for their child’s needs from physicians, dietitians, therapists,