Qualitative Analysis of Student Experiences With Food Access Over Academic Breaks

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Background: Students at residential colleges often rely on meal plans and campus dining opportunities for food access. These facilities often close over academic breaks and there is limited research on how students staying on campus adapt.

Objective: The goal of this study was to explore student experiences with food access when staying on campus over academic breaks.

Study Design, Setting, Participants: The qualitative, exploratory study took place at two coordinated, residential colleges in Minnesota. Eligible participants were undergraduate students over the age of 18 that stayed on campus for at least one academic break during the semester. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and asked about participants’ meal plans, living situations, and experiences accessing food over breaks in comparison to when school is in session. Food security status was assessed via the USDA Six-item Household Food Security Survey Module.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: Inductive thematic coding by two independent coders was conducted to determine thematic analysis.

Results: Twenty-four participants completed interviews. Forty-two percent (n = 10) of participants were food insecure. Common barriers for accessing food over breaks were campus dining center closures or limited hours, lack of resources to purchase extra food, and limited personal kitchen access. Fifty-four percent (n = 13) of participants lived in dorms with a community kitchen and 46% (n=11) had apartment-style living with personal kitchens. Fifty-eight percent (n = 14) of participants had unlimited meal plans that couldn’t be used during breaks. These participants were more likely to “eat less than they normally would” during breaks than students with smaller meal plans. Themes in coping mechanisms for accessing food over breaks when on-campus opportunities were closed were transportation from friends, using their own monetary resources or money from family to purchase food, and collaborating with students that had personal kitchen access to cook group meals.

Conclusion: Students that rely frequently on campus dining opportunities may lack access to food during academic breaks. College campuses need to consider opportunities to support these students moving forward.

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SAM on My Plate: Exploring Head Start Teachers’ Use of Food to Teach Science, Mathematics, and Literacy

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Background: Head Start teachers have suggested using food as a tool to teach across learning domains may alleviate well-described barriers to nutrition education in the preschool classroom. While there are clear benefits to food-based learning (FBL), concerns have been raised about the nutritional quality of foods featured.

Objective: Explore experiences of Head Start teachers’ use of FBL during experiences focused on science, (language) arts, and mathematics (SAM) in the preschool classroom.

Study Design, Setting, Participants: Thirty-five indepth semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with teachers from 16 counties across North Carolina. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: Researchers used thematic analysis to identify significant statements through open and focused coding. Codes were grouped into themes and interrelated themes were condensed into a description of teachers’ experiences. Researchers also identified and counted specific foods used during learning experiences.

Results: Participants were 94% female, 40.8 years (SD = 10.06), predominantly White (52.9%) or Black/African American (44.1%), and of non-Hispanic (97.1%) ethnicity. Teachers identified 105 foods used to teach across learning domains. 44.8% of food items featured were “unhealthy” (high in sugar, fat, sodium, and/or calories). Teachers most frequently described using food in hands-on “experiments” (eg, potato clock) to teach science, graphs and measuring activities to teach mathematics, and reading books about food featured in hands-on activities or during meals/snacks to encourage literacy. Finally, teachers stated that food-based science experiments were often used due to their ability to engage young children’s senses. However, these activities more often wasted food during investigations and were least likely to be clearly connected to health or academic outcome.

Conclusion: Teachers use FBL as a teaching tool across multiple learning domains, but additional training on reducing waste, and aligning activities with Science learning standards is needed.

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Snacking Consumption Among Adults in the United States: A Scoping Review

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Background: Snacks are a staple of the American diet, with most U.S. adults consuming 1 to 3 snacks/day. Snacks contribute approximately 20% of energy intake and can...

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enhance or detract from a pattern of healthy eating. Yet, few reviews have focused on snacking specifically among U.S. adults.

**Objective:** To characterize snacks and snacking occasions of U.S. adults, to further inform healthy eating practices.

**Study Design, Settings, Participants:** The protocol was prepared following the PRISMA-Extension for Scoping Reviews. Three web databases were used to identify articles using snacking or eating occasions as primary or secondary outcomes among U.S. adults. A search strategy was developed using subject headings, truncation, and phrase-searching in the title and abstract of articles published between 2010 and 2022.

**Measurable Outcome/Analysis:** A two-stage screening process was used, during which 31 of 4795 publications were identified as meeting inclusion criteria. Data was extracted into Excel and key findings were thematically analyzed.

**Results:** Snacking tends to be an individual eating event but has not universally applied definition. Three basic themes related to snacking were identified: consumer cues and motivations, snack and meal frequency, and diet composition and weight management. The primary characteristics of snacking emerged as: quality (healthy vs. unhealthy), timing (throughout the day, outside typical meal times), and convenience (grab-and-go). The influence of snack timing on food selection and quality was highlighted.

**Conclusion:** Among adults, snacking influences consumption of energy and critical nutrients. Snacking can be driven by internal or external cues but ultimately, reflects individual decisions that could be influenced through nutrition education. A standard definition of a snack could strengthen snack-based information and could further progress development of policies and nutrition programming, ultimately contributing to diet quality, health, and wellbeing.

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**Social, Economic, and Cultural Influences on Young Women's Food Choices: A Scoping Review**

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**Background:** Understanding influences on food habits is crucial to developing effective strategies to improve dietary quality. Past research shows predictors of food habits may be dependent on individuals’ age and sex; that is, different social groups may experience different influences on their eating patterns. Young women in particular are a population of concern, as they are the group with the greatest disparities between actual and recommended diet quality.

**Objective:** The purpose of this analysis is to better understand what factors may underlie young women’s eating patterns.

**Study Design, Settings, Participants:** We conducted a systematic search of PubMed to identify studies on the social, economic, and cultural influences on food choices of females 13-24 years in the United States. To be included, articles had to be published in a peer-reviewed journal between 2017 and 2022, focus on adolescents or emerging adults, available in English, focus on female participants or disaggregate findings by sex, and include formal analysis of factors (social, cultural, economic, environmental, demographic) related to food, eating, and/or diet.

**Measurable Outcome/Analysis:** A content analysis of articles’ findings was performed separately by two independent reviewers. The two reviewers then jointly identified overarching themes in the literature.

**Results:** We find that although many predictors of food habits for young women mirror predictors found throughout the entire adult population, there are several predictors with unique patterns for young women, including social pressure, parental influence, body dissatisfaction, and “social jetlag” (that is, different sleep patterns on weekends and weekdays). Moreover, our analysis indicates how little research has been conducted on diet quality influences among young women, specifically, as <10% out of n=2944 articles contained findings that met inclusion criteria.

**Conclusion:** This analysis indicates additional research is needed to ascertain predictors of adolescent and young adult women’s food patterns and dietary choices.

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**The Environmental Footprint Associated With the Mediterranean Diet (MED) and Its Implication on Dietary Intervention Programs**

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**Background:** Providing a growing global population with healthy and sustainable diets constitutes an immediate challenge.

**Objective:** To determine the environmental footprint of adherence to the MED in Israel and/or replacing foods with a high environmental burden using a remove-reduce-replace strategy.

**Study Design, Settings, Participants:** We recruited participants via social media, email, and phone. Demographic characteristics were obtained. The participants (n=525) were 49% women, 82% had academic education, 96% were physically active, and 13% were smokers.

**Measurable Outcome/Analysis:** A dietary assessment was performed using the 116-item Food Frequency Questionnaire (FFQ). Adherence to the MED was calculated using a 9-point score. The environmental pressure of the MED was determined based on the footprint family indicators, including land, water, and carbon footprint per unit of agricultural and food products. We assigned values for each type of food comprising the FFQ and calculated the environmental load for the MED and changes associated

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