Prevalence, Perceptions, and Recommendations for Addressing Student Food Insecurity: A Mixed-Methods Investigation

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Background: College and university students in the United States (U.S.) experience a higher level of food insecurity than the national average. However, food insecurity among international students has not been studied enough, which is a gap as these groups may experience heightened barriers to accessing enough nutritious and culturally appropriate foods and are not eligible for government aid.

Objective: The study aimed to investigate food insecurity, obstacles, and solutions related to food resources among international students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Study Design, Setting, and Participants: An mixed-explanatory methods research design was used. An online Qualtrics 30-item survey, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Six-Item Short Form Food Security Module and sociodemographic questions (eg, age, race, ethnicity, living status), was developed to assess the food security status of the students. Food security status was asked during the COVID-19 (March 2020- March 2021) and present status when taking the survey (July 2021- July 2022). Convenience sampling was used to distribute surveys through social media, flyers, and student organization campaigns. Follow-up semi-structured interviews were conducted with interested participants to investigate experiences with food insecurity barriers and possible solutions. Inferential statistics and inductive coding were utilized to analyze the collected data.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: One hundred and fifty international students (47 % male and 53% female) completed the survey, and 30 participated in a follow-up interview. About 68% of participants were found to be food insecure during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was reduced to 61%. Significant obstacles to achieving food security mentioned in the semi-structured interview were related to food facilities on campus, such as food pantry, individual factors such as lack of knowledge, and social barriers, including stigma. Suggested solutions included increasing the availability and variety of culturally appropriate foods.

Conclusion: The majority of international students viewed on-campus food resources as a significant source of assistance during and after COVID. These findings highlight the need for collaborative efforts by universities and policymakers to tackle food insecurity among international students.

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Promoting Food Security Before, During, and After Disasters: Resources to Help Build Food System Resilience

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Background: Disasters around the globe threaten food security, impacting access, availability, and medical and nutritional utilization and accessibility. Disasters present an opportunity for local governments and others to examine the state of the food system and how it can be transformed to provide sustainable, healthy, and just food for all. Food system resilience provides a lens for examining how disasters impact nutrition and food security and methods to equip food system actors for disruptions.

Objective: To develop a guide to build knowledge, capacity, and motivation of local governments and their partners to prepare for, respond to, and recover from food system disruptions.

Study Design, Settings, Participants: We developed the guide with a Community of Practice (CoP) involving participants from five U.S. cities. Through a year-long series of facilitated conversations, city representatives and Johns Hopkins researchers co-developed food system resilience resources.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: We used a mixed-method embedded intervention design to evaluate the CoP. We collected pre-intervention survey data (April

Continued on page 40