Measurable Outcome/Analysis: Descriptive statistics were used to assess types of food establishments and retail participation in the CalFresh program. Results: Food establishments (n=30) on campus and off-campus establishments that met the distance criteria were assigned to these categories: Cafes (36.7%), Markets (30.0%), and Restaurants (33.3%). In the Markets category, which included grocery stores, 20% accepted C-EBT where 3.3% were on-campus markets and 16.7% off-campus. None of the cafes and restaurants on campus accepted C-EBT. The two campus dining halls, included in the Restaurants sample, did not accept C-EBT card but distributed emergency meal plans to students in need. Conclusion: Most food establishments on campus do not accept C-EBT card which suggests the need for campus markets to consider participation in the program to improve students' food security. Future direction calls for programs focused on educating food vendors about the CalFresh Program, and how to apply to be a C-EBT retailer to improve food security for the campus community. Funding: Health Equity Institute at San Francisco State University

Behavioral Barriers to the Use of a Smartphone App for Improving Diet Quality: Findings From a Qualitative Needs Assessment
Sara Henley, MPH, RD, sara.henley@opsishealth.com, Opsis Health; Arielle Gorstein, MPH, ideas42; Andrew Berardy, PhD, Opsis Health

Background: People trying to improve their diet quality and lose weight must navigate a complex, confusing food environment. While smartphone applications to support healthy eating and weight loss exist, they only track calories and macronutrients and don't accurately identify healthy foods.

Objective: We sought to learn about barriers people face when trying to lose weight and improve their eating habits to inform development of a novel digital nutrition tracking and behavior change tool.

Study Design, Setting, Participants: This qualitative needs assessment consisted of thirty 45-minute, semi-structured virtual interviews with subjects aged 35-54 who had used a food tracking app or tried a diet trend in the past year. Participants were representative of the US population. Questions covered nutrition knowledge and information sources, and needs, preferences, and experiences surrounding weight loss and mobile applications. Participants’ compensation was $50.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: Each interview included a leader, note taker, and observer from the research team. Notes were taken transcription style and manually coded using thematic analysis coding.

Results: While most interviewees correctly identified the components of a healthy diet, they shared barriers to consistently eating in a healthful way that resulted in lasting weight loss. Many adopted rigid rules and restrictions around what they could eat, which led to frustration and attrition. While many had used food tracking apps in the past, and found them informative, interviewees expressed that they were too cumbersome to use long-term and lacked actionable guidance. Interviewees want a credible tracking tool that is simple, personalized, and employs a balanced approach to healthy eating.

Conclusion: People trying to eat healthier and lose weight are frustrated by current approaches that dominate the marketplace. Interviewees want a food tracking app that provides actionable, evidence-based guidance to help overcome barriers to improving diet quality without requiring excessive effort. This could promote healthier eating and help consumers navigate a complex, confusing food environment.

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Beyond the Classroom: Student Experiences and Confidence in Addressing Food Insecurity
Cara Cuite, PhD, cuite@rutgers.edu, Rutgers University; Rebecca L. Hagedorn-Hatfield, PhD, RDN, LD, Meredith College; Victoria A. Zigmont, PhD, MPH, University of Mississippi; Susan Chen, PhD, MS, San Jose State University; Virginia B. Gray, PhD, RDN, California State University Long Beach

Background: Experiences with food insecurity (FI) beyond collegiate courses may influence students’ confidence to address this issue in their future careers.

Objective: To understand how students’ extracurricular and personal experiences with FI relate to confidence in addressing FI as future professionals.

Study Design, Settings, Participants: A cross-sectional online survey of undergraduate and graduate students majoring in health fields (n=274) at 12 US universities in 2022.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: Confidence to address FI was measured using 8 items on a 3-point scale, which were combined into a confidence scale with high internal consistency (0.86). FI was scored using the 2-item Hunger Vital Sign. Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare differences in confidence between experiences.

Results: Overall mean confidence was 2.17, ranging from 1.87 (using food security assessment tools) to 2.38 (determining barriers that might influence a client’s nutritional status). FI was personally experienced by 43.1% and 21.5% of students during college and childhood, respectively. Respondents (77.0%) reported having some extracurricular experiences with FI, with volunteer work (40.5%) and service learning (23.9%) being most common. Students who had no experiences outside of the classroom were significantly less confident to address FI compared with those who had (p<0.001). Students with volunteer experience (p=0.009), those who attended a lecture on campus (p<0.001) or off-campus (p=0.03), and those with a related student leadership role (p=0.02) had significantly higher confidence. No significant difference in confidence was observed between those reporting personal experience with FI and those who did not.

Conclusion: Students’ overall confidence in their ability to address FI as future professionals was high. Experiences outside the classroom were related to higher confidence,