SNAP-Eligible Families Encounter Multiple Economic, Social, and Environmental Barriers to Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

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OBJECTIVE

To explore dietary patterns and motivations/barriers to fruit and vegetable consumption among Ohio SNAP-eligible families to inform future social marketing campaign development.

METHODS

Study design: Cross-sectional, mixed methods formative research study that employed focus groups (n=11; 80 participants) and an online survey (n=860). Target audience included SNAP-eligible adults at or below 185% poverty.

Data Collection: Focus group and survey questions were drafted by the SM core team in collaboration with the Kirwan Institute at OSU. Questions assessed family characteristics (e.g., income, ethnicity, number of children in household) and behaviors related to FV purchase, preparation, and consumption.

RESULTS: ONLINE SURVEY

Figure 1: Survey Responses by County

Figure 2: Example of Survey Respondent Demographics

Table 1: What are some reasons for you and your family not eating more fruits and vegetables?

Table 2: Reported Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

RESULTS: FOCUSGROUPS

Table 3: My family and I currently eat vegetables:

Figure 3: What makes it difficult for you and your family to eat more fruits and vegetables?

CONCLUSIONS

- The reasons for low fruit and vegetable consumption among low-income populations are vast and complex. Cost remains the greatest perceived barrier to FV consumption, followed by concerns over quality/freshness, transportation, and preparation.

- Study participants expressed an overwhelming preference for fresh FV, compared with frozen or canned. Such preference ultimately contributes to perceived cost and shelf life barriers.

- There is a misconception about how many servings of fruit and vegetables per day is “enough”. Further nutrition education may help to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables.

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REFERENCES