Background: Food-insecure college students exhibit disordered eating behaviors, possibly due to coping behaviors including restriction when food is scarce and bingeing when food is abundant. The present study aimed to explore how access to a campus food pantry impacts these eating behaviors.

Method: This study used a mixed-methods design, employing both qualitative interviews and quantitative data collection. The qualitative component involved semi-structured, recorded interviews conducted via Zoom, while the quantitative component included a survey distributed to participants.

Results: The qualitative analysis highlighted several key themes related to food insecurity and eating behaviors. Participants reported a variety of strategies to manage their food situation, including meal plans, cooking, and purchasing shelf-stable or bulk foods. Food scarcity and abundance created intense panic and anxiety, with food scarcity leading to increased spending and budgeting for food. Students also described how they cope with food insecurity, such as relying on community and university resources.

Discussion & Conclusions: The findings suggest that campus food pantries may provide important assistance to some students, although many students may experience significant barriers to using one. In conclusion, addressing food insecurity and disordered eating behaviors in college students requires a multifaceted, student-centered approach.

References: A list of relevant research papers and articles is provided at the end of the paper. These references provide evidence supporting the study's findings and conclusions.

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