Background

- In the United States, 10.8% of children live in households that experienced food insecurity (FI) within the last 30 days.
- The prevalence of risk of FI is disparately higher among non-Hispanic Black (15.7%) and Hispanic (18.8%) children, compared to their White counterparts (6.5%).
- Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) and FI are consistently associated with poor health outcomes, including acute and chronic health problems in children.
- Pediatric clinics routinely screen for FI and SDOH; however, clinical-community food assistance and education interventions are understudied.

Objective

The objective of this study was to understand the current landscape and perceptions of clinical-community partnerships to address food insecurity among pediatricians, food assistance program community partners (CPs), and parents/caregivers, to inform the development of a food assistance and education intervention.

Methods

- Community partners (CPs) addressing FI or SDOH were invited to participate in virtual interviews.
- Descriptive statistics were used to characterize demographic characteristics, and pediatrician nutrition knowledge.
- Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and double-coded to identify emerging themes through an inductive approach.

Results

Pediatrician and parent perspectives on addressing SDOH and food insecurity in the clinic

... doctors should be equally involved with the child's food and nutrition... I actually do appreciate [when doctors ask me about food and nutrition], yeah, it's very informative - Parent 5

... it's helpful when they bring it up, and I'm like 'okay, well you put it out there'... or 'I actually do need that resource'... It's not embarrassing for me, but you know [it may be embarrassing] for [other parents] to tell people about their stories or their situation, but I don't really mind - Parent 6

... if somebody's coming in and they're talking about depression, and they're really worried about their kid's mental health, you end up spending the whole time talking about that and you don't even know about food insecurity. That might or might not exist because you just don't have time... - Pediatrician 2

And that is a concern that I have... I might be in a community setting where I don't have a [resource referral program]... And so that is something that I've worried about and wished I've had training on, to kind of build some of those skillsets... - Pediatrician 11

Conclusions

- There appears to be a lack of coordinated clinical-community approaches to addressing food insecurity.
- These results underscore the need for interventions to enhance pediatrician comfort discussing SDOH and nutrition assistance programs.

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References