A Quantitative Study Exploring the Correlation Between Food Security and Nutrition Consumption Amongst College Students in the United States

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Food insecurity is a very common factor in United States institutions, as it impacts 20-50% of students. According to a study by Racine et al. (2022), there are no regulations to promote healthy lifestyles at universities, leading to 20% of students accessing unhealthy meal plans on campus. When college students are unable to access the nutrition, they need to function daily, it could result in long-term health problems such as obesity and malnutrition. The relationship between food environment and nutrition in college students is an alarming issue that needs to be examined to reduce the long-term disadvantages that come from not consuming proper nutrition. The purpose of this study was to explore the correlation between food security and nutrition among California State University, Fullerton college students. It is hypothesized that college students who have more access to a variety of foods will have better nutrition than students who have less access to a variety of foods.

A cross-sectional survey using convenience sampling was conducted during the Fall 2022 semester. The sample consisted of 173 undergraduate CSUF students 55% were Latinx, and 58% were female with a mean age of 21 years. Students were approached at the food pantry, student housing, diversity initiatives, resources centers, and Instagram. The demographic variables in our study included gender, age, academic standing, and race/ethnicity. Food security is our independent variable while nutrition is our dependent variable.

Our study suggests that most students are food secure and college students are consuming a relatively healthy diet. The literature review findings suggest that there is a correlation between food security and nutrition. There are differences in our study compared to our literature review findings. Future research recommendations suggest obtaining more participants by expanding research to multiple universities in the United States.