

Poster Session III
Poster # 17

Predictors of Food Security In Older Adults From The Ecological Model Of Health Behavior

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Purpose: Describe levels of food security (FS) and identify variables from the Ecological Model of Health Behavior (EMHB) that correlate with and are indicators of FS in community-dwelling older adults.

Research Questions: What is the level of FS from the Food Security Supplement (FSS) for older adults? Which Current Population Survey (CPS)/FSS characteristics significantly predict FS? Hypothesis: variables based on the EMHB correlate with and significantly predict FS.

Theoretical Framework: EMHB describes associations between environmental factors (intrapersonal, interpersonal or sociocultural, policy, and physical) and health behavior.

Methods: A descriptive correlational design was used for this secondary analysis of data from CPS/FSS, 12/2008. The sample was 1,246 adults ≥ 65 years old from Northeast U.S. Annual CPS interviews occurred between decennial censuses in selected areas generating demographic statistics. Late fall respondents completed FSS interviews for four consecutive months, which were repeated one year later. FSS examines food expenditure, minimum food spending needed, participation in food assistance programs, concerns about FS, and coping strategies. The FS score was dichotomized as Food Security (high/marginal FS) and Food Insecurity (low/very low FS). Level of FS was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Predictors of FS were analyzed with correlation matrix, Chi Square, simple and multivariable binary logistic regression with 2-tailed testing and significance level set at $p < .05$.

Results: Significant independent predictors of FS were other race (OR=.265, $p=.003$), participation in food assistance programs (OR=.460, $p<.001$), and education (OR=2.036, $p=.005$) with black race showing a trend toward being an independent predictor (OR=.539, $p=.055$).

Conclusions and Implications: Persons of black and other non-white races and those participating in food assistance programs were 46%, 74%, and 54% less likely to have FS, respectively, whereas those with greater than high school education were 2 times more likely to have FS. These results will be used to direct FS interventions in older adults.