

Food Insecurity: Risk Factors, Characteristics, and Lifestyle Changes among University Students during COVID Pandemic

Introduction

Over 30% of college students were food insecure before the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, the rates of food insecurity on college campuses are varied and it has been reported as high as 59%, indicating an increase in the risk of food insecurity among college students. Food insecurity is related to many risk factors such as race/ethnicity, individual economic stability, community and social support, and governmental food programs and policies. For college students, more specific food insecurity risk factors that impact the success of academic performance have been studied and received public attention after the COVID-19 crisis. Because of these complicated relations, food insecurity should be understood as a holistic view to create sustainable solutions/policies to college students and their communities. Therefore, this study has three objectives: 1) to identify the prevalence of food insecurity and food insecurity risk factors, 2) to understand the impact of food insecurity on psychological health, diet quality, and academic performance among college students during the COVID-19 pandemic, and 3) to develop a tailored intervention to improve financial skills, self-efficacy, and healthy eating behaviors among food insecure college students.

Student Voice

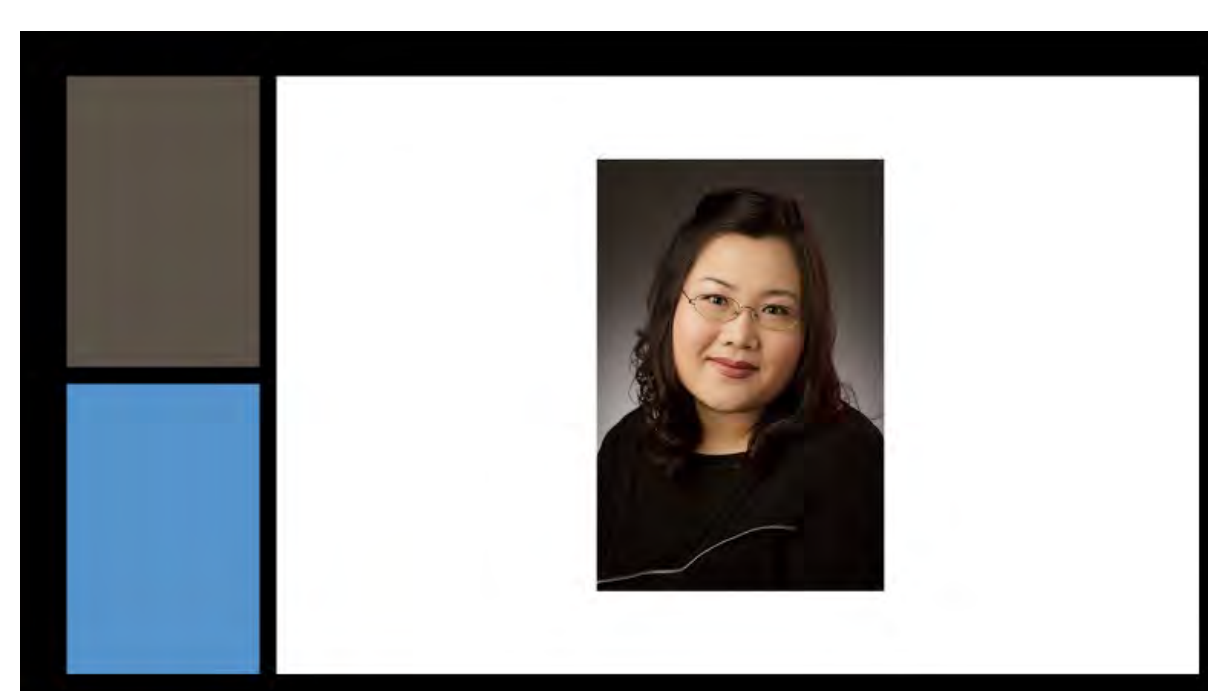
In this project, we will work with the undergraduate and graduate students at Texas Tech University in understanding their experiences with food insecurity. An online survey was circulated to identify the students' access to food in relation to their financial, nutritional, well-being, and academic achievement. We will invite food insecure students to an intervention that will teach them financial knowledge and skills to improve money management, as well as to improve nutritional knowledge (i.e., fruit and vegetable intake) to lessen the severity of negative health outcomes caused by food insecurity.

Joy Driver: My project aims to find relationships between food insecurity, diet quality, stress level, time management, and academic achievements during COVID-19.

Esimisan Akra: My goal is to educate as many students as possible on how to use their money wisely. I especially want the students to obtain good budgeting skills so that sufficient money is set aside to buy food items necessary for a proper diet.

Sara Phy: My project is aimed specifically at increasing fruit and vegetable intake, nutrition knowledge, cooking skills, and self-efficacy to improve both the mental health and diet quality of food insecure students.

Faculty Voice



Three words to remember:
Creativity,
Effective
Communication, &
Teamwork

Transformative Experiences

Expected Outcomes

Food insecurity is a multifaceted issue, and our project was developed during COVID-19. Our research is purposed to intervene in a holistic way to improve the negative effects of food insecurity for college students during the pandemic. Our team will identify the prevalence and risk factors of food insecurity among college students. And after our intervention, we anticipate seeing an increase in students' financial and nutritional knowledge and skills, to better equip them in managing food insecurity.

Team

Faculty: Oak-Hee Park

Students: Joy Driver, Esimisan Akra, Sara Phy, & Hsiao-Chun Wang

