



Prevalence and Coping Strategies of Food Insecure University Students in Iceland.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE: This study aimed to assess prevalence of food insecurity (FI) among university students in Iceland, and what FI indicators were used as coping strategies. Additionally, the effects of FI on educational outcome and food consumption were evaluated.

METHOD: University students (approx. 20,800) were invited to answer an online questionnaire that consisted of the Food Insecurity Experience Scale, with additional questions on demographics, socioeconomic status, academic performance, and food consumption. Total of 924 students answered the questionnaire (74.5% females).

RESULTS: Depending on the criteria, roughly 17-29.8% of students were considered food insecure. The most common coping strategies among students living with FI were low food variety (97.6%), unhealthy eating (88%) and consuming less foods than required (76%) due to financial difficulties or lack of other resources. Additionally, 21% of FI students did not eat for a whole day and roughly 50% were hungry but did not eat due to financial difficulties or lack of other resources.

Significantly more food insecure students compared to food secure students experienced negative changes in academic performance (64.5% vs. 48%) over the study period and consumed less amount of food (50% vs. 14%).

DISCUSSION: The occurrence of FI among Icelandic university students is alarming. FI negatively affects food consumption, i.e., diet quality, meal frequency and the amount of food eaten, which can result in nutrient inadequacies and disordered eating patterns. Negative effects on academic performance and achievement can

have a longer effect as well as destructive impact on mental health.

Topics: Other

For workshops only

No Answer Given

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