

Their Next Meal: Food Insecurity Among Washington Residents

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Abstract: Food insecurity is a term used to describe uncertain availability of sufficient food necessary for good health. Food insecurity has been significantly associated with obesity and diabetes, as well as depression or anxiety among mothers in food insecure households. The 2007 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System included a series of questions about food insecurity. Bivariate analysis helped us identify factors to include in a multivariate logistic regression model to ascertain the relative contribution of each. We found low income and young age to be most strongly associated with food insecurity. Compared to respondents in households with annual incomes of \$50,000 or more, respondents in low income (< \$25,000) households had a 17 times higher odds of food insecurity. Respondents in the \$25-35,000 and \$35-50,000 categories had 7 and 3 times higher odds of food insecurity, respectively than the high income category. Respondents aged 20 through 44 were about 15 times more likely to report food insecurity than respondents over the age of 74; the odds diminished as age increased. Having fair or poor health, being a current smoker or being of Hispanic ethnicity were associated with a greater than two-fold increase in odds of food insecurity after controlling for income and age. Factors with a weaker association included American Indian/Alaska Native race, less than high school education, divorced marital status and female gender.