SILENT HUNGER: A COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF FOOD INSECURITY

BACKGROUND

- Food insecurity (FI) is formally defined as "unreliable access to adequate food caused by lack of money or other resources." Food insecurity is typically associated with poorer diet quality, including reduced consumption of fruits and vegetables, lower prevalence of chronic diseases, and higher health care costs [1-3]. Populations at higher risk include households with children, single parents, and low household income [5]. Research has shown that food insecurity programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), are associated with improved outcomes including better health, nutrition, education, and lower health care costs [1-4].

AIM

- By the end of December 2022, the Village Family Medicine Clinic will address Food Insecurity in at least 50% of patients that present to clinic for preventative wellness visits.

METHODOLOGY

- Data collection via one question survey provided during preventative medical appointments. Responses are documented in the electronic health record.
- Food insecurity question: "How often in the past 12 months would you say that you or anyone in your household not enough money to buy nutritious food?" Answer choices: "Never, rarely, sometimes, usually, or always."
- If they select "never" or no further interventions are indicated. If they answer any other choice, then the screen is positive and a list of resources is added to their aftervisit summary to help connect patients to needed services.

RESULTS

- Food insecurity was screened over multiple days, resulting in 50% of patients identifying as food insecure.
- Consistent with previous findings, patients who identified as food insecure were more likely to report chronic health conditions, lower household income, and lower educational attainment.

CONCLUSIONS

- Food insecurity was screened over multiple days, resulting in 50% of patients identifying as food insecure.
- Consistent with previous findings, patients who identified as food insecure were more likely to report chronic health conditions, lower household income, and lower educational attainment.

- The study demonstrates the importance of identifying and addressing food insecurity as a community health issue.
- The results suggest that screening for food insecurity should be integrated into primary care practices to improve patient outcomes.
- Further research is needed to better understand the impact of food insecurity on health outcomes and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions aimed at addressing food insecurity.

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REFERENCES