

The implications of food insecurity for nutritional adequacy

Li, T., & Hutchinson, J. M. (2025). The implications of food insecurity for nutritional adequacy. *CRDCN Research-Policy Snapshots*, 4(1). <http://hdl.handle.net/11375/30917>

Context

Household food insecurity is a well-established social determinant of health. While previous research has shown that food insecurity increases the risk of nutrient inadequacy, this study is the first to examine this relationship across the severity of food insecurity in Canada. Households are classified as more severely food-insecure if the experience of deprivation goes beyond worrying about affording food or limited food selection to more serious compromises in the quality and quantity of food consumed. The researchers modelled distributions of usual micronutrient intakes using data on food and beverage consumption and determined the proportion of people with inadequate micronutrient intakes at each level of food insecurity.

Key finding(s) from the research

Adults living in more severely food-insecure households are more likely to have inadequate intakes of a wide range of micronutrients, including vitamins A, B6, and C, folate, calcium, magnesium, and zinc.

Population(s) studied: Adults aged 19–64 years in the 10 provinces

Research dataset(s) used: 2015 Canadian Community Health Survey Nutrition

Policy implications for this research

The findings add to a large body of evidence showing poorer dietary intake and health for Canadians living in more severely food-insecure households and reinforce the need for governments to make food insecurity reduction a policy objective. The only policy interventions shown to reduce food insecurity have been those that improve the financial circumstances of struggling households, like improvements to minimum wage, social assistance, or child benefits. Since the health consequences of food insecurity are worse for people living in severely food-insecure households, interventions should prioritize support for households most likely to be severely food-insecure, such as those with very low incomes.

Policy area(s) this research can inform: Health; Income, pensions, spending and wealth

Read the full article

Hutchinson, J. M., & Tarasuk, V. (2024). Prevalence of micronutrient inadequacy differs by severity of food insecurity among adults living in Canada in 2015. *Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism*, 49(8). <https://doi.org/10.1139/apnm-2023-0614>