

**Methods:**

Photovoice and creative mapping methods were used whereby parents were requested to take photos of factors influencing food-related decisions and draw maps of their food environments. These items were then used during qualitative interviews with 28 parents from across the Island of Ireland as a reference for discussions around the food environment and food decision-making processes of economically disadvantaged parents. Data were analysed using deductive thematic analysis.

**Results:**

The findings were situated in Bronfenbrenner's Social Ecological Theoretical framework, conceptualising the COVID-19 crisis as an exogenous socio-historical factor that exerted significant influence on the food-related practices of families in Ireland. The pandemic and responses to it altered patterns of food purchasing, preparation, decision-making and consumption. Changes to practices included increased unhealthy snacking and grazing and consuming fewer meals outside the home. Participants on particularly low incomes relied more on benefits and subsidised food sources and consumed more cheap, processed and frozen foods.

**Conclusions:**

This study provides insight into the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on dietary habits. The observed changes to food practices may compound food insecurity and already high levels of obesity, particularly among children and young people, and have future implications on prevalence of nutrition-related conditions. This highlights the need for healthcare professionals and policy-makers to be cognisant of the mounting health issues that will need to be addressed in the wake of COVID-19.

**Key messages:**

- The COVID-19 crisis significantly impacted on family food related behaviours in Ireland.
- Post-COVID health promoters should re-focus efforts on healthy eating initiatives.

**Changes in food-related practices among families in Ireland as a consequence of COVID-19**

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**Introduction:**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an inordinate influence on people's lives, including impacts on food behaviours. This study explored the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and ensuing public health restrictions on food-related practices of families living on a tight budget on the Island of Ireland.