

Food Insecurity, Diet Quality and Barriers to Healthy Eating During the COVID-19 Pandemic Among Adults Who Identify As LGBTQI: A Descriptive Study

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Objectives: To describe food insecurity, diet quality, and barriers to healthy eating during the COVID-19 pandemic among adults who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or intersex (LGBTQI) and live in Newark, NJ.

Methods: This pilot study utilized a cross-sectional design with a web-based survey, and participants provided informed consent. Food insecurity was assessed using the United States Department of Agriculture's validated 6-item short-form food security module. Diet quality was assessed using the PrimeScreen questionnaire [score range 0–42, with higher scores indicating better diet quality]. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe the results.

Results: Of the 50 participants, 60% were <30 years old; 81.6% were assigned male sex at birth, 56% identified as male, 36% were Hispanic, and 73.3% were Black or African American. A third (32%) were unemployed, and 56% reported a loss of finances due to the pandemic. Forty percent of the sample were food insecure, and 64% had low diet quality scores of between 11 and 20. More than half (68%) reported a worsening of their diet due to the pandemic, and 58% reported the cost of healthy food as a barrier.

Conclusions: High food insecurity and poor diet quality were observed in this study. Participants also identified the high cost of healthy food as a barrier to healthy eating.

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