

Household Factors Associated With Home Food Availability Among Latinx Families With Middle School-Aged Children

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Objectives: To examine household factors associated with home food availability among Latinx families with middle school-aged children.

Methods: Dyads of Latinx parents and a middle school-aged child enrolled in a trial testing the efficacy of a nutrition-enhanced school-based parenting intervention in a Southwestern metropolitan area. During a baseline home visit, trained research assistants used a culturally-adapted version of the home food inventory to count the number of different types of fruits, vegetables, and sugar-containing food items available in the home. The latter were disaggregated into white bread, high-sugar cereals, prepared and frozen desserts, and sugar-sweetened beverages and candies. Household factors included as independent variables were food insecurity, frequency of family meals, frequency of conversations about healthy eating, and household size. Poisson regression models accounting for clustered data at the school-level were used to assess associations.

Results: Of 108 participating households, 72.2% were food secure, 52.8% had ≥ 7 weekly family meals, 49.1% had conversations about healthy eating habits almost every day, and the mean household size was 5.4 ± 1.89 people. Households had 7.4 ± 3.0 different types of fruits, 9.9 ± 3.6 different types of vegetables, and 9.1 ± 4.1 different types of sugar-containing foods available. Compared to households where healthy eating conversations happened almost every day, those with fewer conversations had a lower count of fruits (Adjusted Incidence Rate Ratio [AIRR] 0.75, 95% confidence interval [CI] 0.57–0.98). Compared to food secure households, low and very low food security was associated with a lower count of vegetables (AIRR 0.87, 95% CI 0.76–0.99; and 0.68, 0.56–0.83, respectively), and low food security was associated with a lower count of white bread. Compared to households with ≥ 7 weekly family meals, the count of all sugar subgroups, except white bread, was lower among households with lower frequency of family meals.

Conclusions: Results suggest that household food security and having family conversations around healthy eating habits are two relevant factors that may help improve the availability of fruits and vegetables among Latinx households.

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