

Terms of the game

Food Insecurity (FIS) is the limited or uncertain access to affordable, quality, and healthy food.

Food Apartheid (FA) is the purposeful and intentional denial of access to affordable, quality, and healthy foods to a specific demographic.

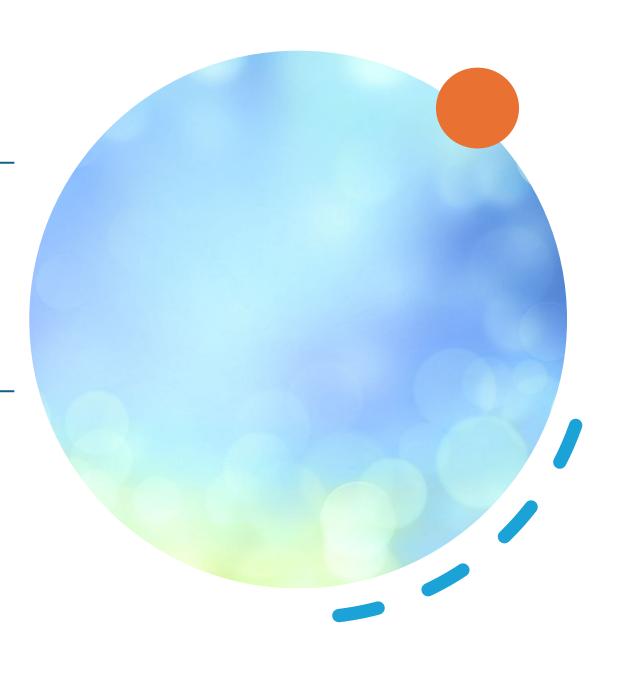
FIS and FA are positively related to higher rates of mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression, and serious mental health incidents



Why?

Food insecurity (FIS) and Food Apartheid (FA) doesn't just deny communities the right to access affordable, quality food. It is a long-lasting brand for some of our most vulnerable populations.

The effects of food security status reach far beyond hunger and the invisible socioeconomic caste system and become a stagnant pool for the decomposition of the effecter's physiological, developmental, and mental health long term.



That's Why!

- Mental health disorders are a leading cause of disability, affecting close to 1 billion people globally.
- Food Insecurity/Food Apartheid (FIS/FAP) creates an environment for chronic stress and nutritional deficiencies that increase adverse health outcomes and exacerbate existing mental health conditions.



Methods

- A mixed-methods study using qualitative and quantitative data.
- Qualitative data were gathered through the University of Washington Library's Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL) database, PubMed, interviews, and literature.







Methods

- The Washington Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)
- Qualitatively examines the associations between adults considered Food Insecure (FIS), and days of good mental and physical health amongst the Pierce County population.

Biological and Physiological Pathways



The brain can be negatively impacted by malnutrition through low-quality diets, nutrient deficiencies, and stress.



Poor diets were more common amongst populations with poor mental health.



FIS has been linked to over- and undernutrition, eating disturbances (anorexia, bulimia), and nutritional deficiencies that bring about psychiatric symptoms.



The gut-microbiota-brain axis can be negatively impacted through a deficient diet, causing inflammation, immune responses, gastrointestinal diseases, and other negative health outcomes that have been known to increase mental health episodes.



Food Insecurity/Food Apartheid and Mental Health

 Food insecurity is linked to compromised mental health amongst women in high-income countries (the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia).

 Lack of access to quality and affordable foods increases the likelihood of resorting to supplemental, less-than-healthy nutritional habits.

 This also increases the chances of developmental issues in pregnant or expecting mothers.



Vulnerable Populations

More than 2.3 billion people globally faced FIS/FIA in 2022. FIS/FIA is directly related to reduced life satisfaction, negatively impacts the mental health of women between the ages of 25 and 64 the most, and adults and the elderly are the next potential groups at risk for FIS/FIA.

In Tanzania in the year 2020, a significant connection was discovered between child stunting due to malnutrition and women who had experienced high-risk pregnancies with children under 5 years of age.



Limitations



The timeframe in which to gather data and information was limited, which restricted the number of resources (interviews, surveys, datasets, books, and documentaries), which limited some valuable information that was omitted to protect the integrity of the information.



The food security question within the 2023 BRFSS codebook provides a minimal look into food security, only inquiring about having the means to acquire food.

Cost of the Long Game

- Without intervention, we abandon communities, increase access and financial pressure on the health care system, and create intercommunity hostility.
- It begins in development, from a malnourished or poorly nourished mother, to development and capacity to exist and sustain within their community's food delivery system.



The Numbers

• The number you see on the slide of 47.4 million, was the number of individuals who are food insecure in this country in 2023. Within that population, 7.2 million children are believed to be in food-insecure households. That's 1 in 9 children. This population is at higher risk of cognitive and developmental delays, chronic stress, anxiety, depression, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Anorexia, Bulimia, and the list continues.

Solutions



Creating community clinics that focus on mental health services public health on a community level, with physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants whose expertise focuses on the local communities they serve.



Community farmers markets are a way to acquire produce and an opportunity for cooking displays, recipe exchanges, and mental health boosting activities.

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