April 13th, 2017  1:00 – 2:30 PM Eastern

Who is vulnerable to household food insecurity and what does this mean for policy and practice?

Moderator:

Craig Larsen
Executive Director
Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada

Presenters:

Valerie Tarasuk, PhD
Professor, University of Toronto and PROOF principal investigator

Lynn McIntyre, MD, MHSc, FRCPC, FCAHS
Professor Emerita, University of Calgary and PROOF investigator

Pat Vanderkooy, MSc, RD
Public Affairs Manager, Dietitians of Canada

Welcome! We will start the audio at 1pm Eastern. Audio will be broadcast over GoToWebinar automatically and all participant microphones are muted.
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Quick Overview of GoToWebinar (cont’d)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Health</th>
<th>Health Practitioner/Professional</th>
<th>Provincial /Territorial Government/Ministry</th>
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<td>Social or Human Services</td>
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<td>Other (e.g., NGO)</td>
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Household Food Security Survey Module
(administered on the Canadian Community Health Survey since 2004)

18 questions, differentiating adults’ and children’s experiences over last 12 months:

- Worry about not having enough food
- Reliance on low-cost foods
- Not being able to afford balanced meals
- Adults/children skip meals
- Adults/children cut size of meals
- Adults lost weight
- Adults/children not having enough to eat
- Adults/children not eating for whole day

“because there wasn’t enough money to buy food?”
Marginal food insecurity

Worry about running out of food and/or limit food selection because of lack of money for food.

Moderate food insecurity

Compromise in quality and/or quantity of food due to a lack of money for food.

Severe food insecurity

Miss meals, reduce food intake and at the most extreme go day(s) without food.


• 12.6% of households
• over 4 million Canadians

(\textit{an increase of > 600,000 since 2007})
2012

Household food insecurity by province & territory

Data Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), 2012.

Ontario, Quebec, Alberta & British Columbia accounted for the largest share of food insecure households in Canada: 84% of the food insecure population.

Number of food insecure households by province & territory

Data Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), 2012.

WHO IS FOOD INSECURE?
Food insecurity by household composition

Data Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), 2012.

2012

Proportion of children under 18 who lived in food insecure households

Data Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), 2012.

Food insecurity is racialized.

Household food insecurity by cultural/racial group of respondent

Food insecurity among Indigenous groups

Canadian Community Health Survey, 2012:
• **28.2%** of households with an aboriginal respondent were food insecure, but CCHS omits people living on First Nations communities and in some northern/remote regions.

Focused surveys among Inuit and First Nations communities:
• **50-70%** prevalences of food insecurity
  e.g., Inuit Health Survey 2007-08, Aboriginal People’s Survey 2012, First Nations Regional Health Survey 2008/2010
**Relationship between immigration and food insecurity?**

![Bar chart showing household food insecurity status by respondent’s immigration status](chart)

**Multivariate analysis, CCHS 2011-12**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OR (95% CI)</th>
<th>aOR (95% CI)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canadian born</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrated in last 5 yrs</td>
<td>1.67 (1.37–2.04)</td>
<td>0.72 (0.55–0.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrated &gt; 5 yrs</td>
<td>0.92 (0.84–1.00)</td>
<td>0.89 (0.78–1.02)</td>
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Adjusted Odds Ratio (aOR): adjusted for household income, education, household composition, home ownership, province/territory of residence, urban/rural location, ethno-racial identity of respondent.

INCOME
Relationship between food insecurity and household income:

Relationship between food insecurity and household income:

Food insecurity captures material deprivation.

*the product of* ... income
- stability
- adequacy relative to expenses (e.g., shelter, food, medications, debt)
- income shocks

and assets
- home ownership

Prevalence of food insecurity by main source of income, 2014

Prevalence of food insecurity by main source of income, 2014

Low benefit levels + asset limits + restrictions on earnings = extreme vulnerability.

Prevalence of food insecurity among households whose main source of income was social assistance, by province/territory, 2011-12

Note: PEI and Northwest Territories have been omitted because of the small size of the samples there.
Prevalence of food insecurity among households in Newfoundland and Labrador reporting any income from social assistance, 2007-2012

NL’s Poverty Reduction Actions included:
- ↑ income support rates
- indexed rates to inflation
- ↑ earning exemptions
- ↑ low-income tax threshold
- ↑ liquid asset limits

(Loopstra, Dachner & Tarasuk, Canadian Public Policy, 015)
What is special about seniors’ incomes?

Comparison of food insecurity outcomes of low income Canadians aged 55-64 (largely non-eligible) vs 65-74 (Old age security; Guaranteed Income Supplement eligible)

- Used CCHS cycles spanning 2007 to 2013
  - Household income $20,000 or less
  - Personal income $20,000 or less
  - Not married

(McIntyre et al., *Canadian Public Policy*, 2016)
Main Personal Income Source for Low-Income Unattached Respondents by Age Group (Weighted), CCHS 2007-2013

Figure 1: Proportion of income source by age group

(McIntyre et al., Canadian Public Policy, 2016)
Probability of moderate and severe food insecurity by age among low-income unattached adults (CCHS 2007-13)

(McIntyre et al., Canadian Public Policy, 2016)
Both the prevalence and severity of food insecurity are reduced by policy interventions that improve the financial circumstances of vulnerable households.

Further support:
- Reduction in food insecurity among social assistance recipients in BC following one-time increase in rates (Li et al, Prev Med 2016)
- 2 studies of changes within individual households over time both found improvements in food security related to improvements in income and employment. (Loopstra & Tarasuk, J Nutr 2013; McIntyre et al, J Poverty 2014)

Implication for policy intervention:
Food insecure households’ main source of income

- **Wages, salaries or self-employment** (1,000,600) - 62.2%
- **Social Assistance** (258,800) - 16.1%
- **Senior's income, including dividends & interest** (198,100) - 12.3%
- **Other or none** (103,200) - 6.4%
- **Employment insurance or workers compensation** (48,000) - 3%

Data Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), 2012.

2012 Proportion of food insecure households who were reliant on wages and salaries

Data Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), 2012.
Why are so many households reliant on employment incomes food insecure?

- low-waged jobs
- short-term, part-time, contingent, ‘precarious’ work
- multi-person households reliant on wages of one earner

↑ minimum wages or living wages will not alter vulnerability rooted in *not having enough work*

(McIntyre et al, *Public Health Nutrition* 2012)
Food insecurity among home owners and renters, CCHS 2014

- 64% of food insecure households are renters.
- After adjustment for socio-demographic characteristics, renters still have 2-3 times the odds of food insecurity.

(Tarasuk, Mitchell & Dachner, Household Food Insecurity in Canada, 2014. 2016.)
What accounts for the difference in household food insecurity between homeowners and renters?

- Renters are more likely than homeowners to have socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics associated with increased odds of food insecurity.
  
  e.g., lower incomes, lower education levels, younger, less likely to be married.

- These characteristics account for 70.9% of the overall difference in the odds of being moderately or severely food insecure.

- This leaves 29.1% of the gap attributable to the protective impact of homeownership over renting.

(McIntyre et al, J Hous and the Built Environ, 2016)
Why is homeownership protective against household food insecurity?

– For owners, ‘hedge’ against inflation
  • compared to renting appears to provide a household with insurance against rental cost inflation

– Source of self-insurance against transitory income shocks
  • reflects greater assets and access to credit
  • unclear implications depending on mortgage indebtedness

– Government policies favour homeownership

(McIntyre et al, J Hous and the Built Environ, 2016)
Household food insecurity status of households living in subsidized housing (n=455)

- **food secure, 49%**
- **moderate food insecurity, 23%**
- **marginal food insecurity, 9%**
- **severe food insecurity, 19%**


(Fafard-St Germain & Tarasuk, Can J Public Health 2017)
Predicted probability of household food insecurity among households in subsidized housing in relation to their after-tax income*

* Predicted probabilities calculated from multivariable logistic regression with the other variables fixed at the observed values. Range of after-tax income based on the 5th and 95th percentile rounded to nearest $5,000.

(Fafard-St Germain & Tarasuk, Can J Public Health 2017)
Fixing rent at 30% of income does not ensure adequate $$ for food. It depends on household income.

- Policies and programs to improve housing affordability need to ensure the adequacy of household incomes. Just like owners, renters need to be able to buffer income shocks to remain food secure.
Household characteristics/conditions examined in multivariate analyses predicting household food insecurity status

**Increased odds:**
- Lower income
- Reliance on social assistance
- Renter (vs home owner)
- Presence of children under 18 yr (vs couple without children)
- Lone-parent female-led households
- Aboriginal or black respondent

**Decreased odds:**
- Reliance on seniors’ pension or retirement income
- Immigrant vs Canadian born

**No evidence of association:**
- Food skills
- Use of home or community garden for food
- Proximity to food retail (*only small-scale studies*)
A guaranteed basic income would remove vulnerability to food insecurity that results from the inadequacy and insecurity of lower incomes.
Dietitians of Canada
Position and Recommendations: Household Food insecurity

What does it mean for policy & practice?

Pat Vanderkooy, MSc, RD
Manager Public Affairs, Dietitians of Canada

April 13, 2017 pat.vanderkooy@dietitians.ca
Dietitians of Canada: Household Food Insecurity

1980s - Dietitians of Canada (DC)/ Canadian Dietetic Association (CDA) – more awareness & advocacy

1991 - First position paper: *The official position paper of the Canadian Dietetic Association on hunger and food security in Canada*

2005 - Second position paper: *Individual and Household Food Insecurity in Canada: Position of Dietitians of Canada*

2007 - Position paper: *Community Food Security*

2016 - Third time, with updates and recommendations: *Backgrounder, Position & Recommendations*

meanwhile…. 2007 - Health Canada
2012 - UN Special Rapporteur
2013 - 2016 – PROOF reports
Health Canada 2007: Income-related Household Food Security

Definition: “…. physical & economic access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to meet dietary needs and food preferences…” (FAO, 1996)

- **Food secure** = no, or one, indication of difficulty with income-related food
- **Moderately food insecure** = compromised quality/quantity
- **Severely food insecure** = reduced food intake, disrupted eating pattern

Implications: Research & Monitoring, Public Policy:
“….tackling income-related food insecurity in a sustainable way will require addressing factors associated with income … [including] adequate and affordable housing, education, secure employment and financial support”

Proof Publications: .... from 2013 to ?

*Household Food Insecurity in Canada 2011-2014* &.... identifying policy options to reduce food insecurity
UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR 2012: Visit & Report
“....to examine the way in which the human right to adequate food is being realized in Canada”

- Situation
- Legal, institutional & policy framework
- Food availability: agricultural policies
- Food accessibility: among poorest
- Food adequacy
- Food aid, development cooperation
- Indigenous peoples

2012: What dietitians said about food insecurity

**Definition** includes: quantity & quality of food – 60%, food as a basic human right – 30%

**Causes:** income inadequacy – 77%, food prices – 42%, housing – 40%

**Effectively address HFI (vs actual practice):**
short term relief - 29% (vs 38%); capacity building - 85% (vs 45%); system change - 88% (vs 18%)

**Why?** immediacy of individual client needs, complexity of issue, lack of knowledge/skill/confidence needed to redesign strategies, lack of employer support (via mandate and time) to engage in long term solutions - a professional dilemma

**Role for professional associations:** 1) clarify appropriate role for dietitians in food security, 2) lobby government, position statements.

Authors: Elaine Power + 3 contributing

Advisory Committee: 19 DC members

Reviews: 60+ DC members, DC

Aboriginal Nutrition Network, DC Nutrition & Food Security Network, Gov’t departments

Updates & presentations

When will we finish this paper??!

• PROOF was beginning to publish ++
• Indigenous Peoples surveys – FNFNES, IHS
• CCHS, CHMS
• Mental Health Commission
• Engaging DC members
• Commitment to make official recommendations
Backgrounder; Position Statement & Recommendations; and Executive Summary

Household Food Insecurity

www.dietitians.ca/foodinsecurity

Background

One in eight Canadian households do not have enough money to buy safe and nutritious food. Household food insecurity, the inadequate or insecure access to food because of financial constraints, is a serious public health issue in Canada. For individuals living in food insecure households, there is greater likelihood of having or developing one or more chronic physical and/or mental health conditions and becoming a ‘high cost user’ of health care services.

Position

All households in Canada must have sufficient income for secure access to nutritious food after paying for other basic necessities. Given the alarming prevalence, severity and impact of household food insecurity in Canada, it is essential that a pan-Canadian, government-led strategy be put in place to specifically reduce food insecurity at the household level, including policies that address the unique challenges of Indigenous Peoples.

Regular monitoring of the prevalence and severity of household food insecurity across all of Canada is required. Research must continue to address gaps in knowledge about household vulnerability to food insecurity and to evaluate the impact of policies developed to eliminate household food insecurity in Canada.

DC website
Dietitians’ Views
www.dietitians.ca/foodinsecurity

August 2016
Actions

In August 2016, Dietitians of Canada released 3 documents addressing household food insecurity in Canada:

1. the Background Paper - including information about the prevalence, severity and causes of household food insecurity in Canada, with references,
2. the Position Statement and Recommendations - addressing the issues related to household food insecurity, with referenced rationale, and
3. the Executive Summary - which includes the position statement, recommendations and key information from the two larger, referenced documents.

DC’s Public Policy Statement on Household Food Insecurity is available in English and French in the Journal of Canadian Dietetic Practice and Research 2016;77:159
ÉNONÇÉ DE POSITION - L’Insécurité Alimentaire des Ménages au Canada (Rev can prat rech diétét. 2016; 77:159)

We refer to our position and recommendations in DC advocacy work, such as submissions to consultations and government briefs - see Resources below for some examples. In August 2016, Dietitians of Canada also endorsed the OSNPPH Position Statement on Responses to Food Insecurity.

Dietitians of Canada has invited other organizations to endorse our position statement and recommendations on Household Food Insecurity. The following list is updated as we continue to receive endorsements.

DC website www.dietitians.ca/foodinsecurity
1. Prevalence, Severity and Impact of Household Food Insecurity (HFI): A Serious Public Health Issue (Backgrounder)

Right to Food, Definitions

Measuring HFI

Prevalence

Income and HFI

Physical & Mental Health Consequences

Populations Disproportionately Affected
  - Life stage, gender, racialization, health and other risks
  - Indigenous Peoples: unique challenges
  - Housing factors
  - Newcomers to Canada

Managing HFI – Strategies Used to Attempt to Cope
2. Addressing Household Food Insecurity in Canada: Position Statement & Recommendations

Position Statement

Poverty & HFI concerns of health professionals

Poverty & HFI are costly health issues

Current responses to HFI

1. Income-based strategies
2. Unique challenges - Indigenous Peoples
3. Monitoring and Reporting
4. Research Gaps

Evidence for action
(thank you, PROOF!)

+ 4 official recommendations

Summary of Recommendations
3. Executive Summary – English & French
Dietitians of Canada Position Statement

It is the position of Dietitians of Canada that household food insecurity is a serious public health issue with profound effects on physical and mental health and social well-being. All households in Canada must have sufficient income for secure access to nutritious food after paying for other basic necessities.

..... focus on health impacts and need for income security
..... with recommendations
Dietitians of Canada Recommendations:

1. Development and implementation of a **pan-Canadian government-led strategy** that includes coordinated policies and programs, to ensure all households have consistent and sufficient income to be able to pay for basic needs, including food. The strategy should consider:

   - income protection
   - benefits (families & unattached individuals)
   - social assistance, disability pension
   - feasibility of guaranteed annual income
   - housing options
   - high cost of food - remote/northern regions; Nutrition North Canada or other programs

*see also: OSNPPH 2015 Income-related Policy Recommendations to Address Food Insecurity*
2. Implementation of a federally-supported strategy to comprehensively address the **additional & unique challenges** related to household food insecurity among Indigenous Peoples, including:

- reconciliation (Truth and Reconciliation Commission & United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)
- fair resolution of land/resource disputes per Indigenous and Treaty rights - food sovereignty, traditional/country foods
- traditional/country foods: supports & barriers - hunting, fishing or gathering/cultivating
- store-bought/market foods: reserves, northern/remote communities; food prices, Nutrition North Canada subsidies and/or other programs
- education and employment, income adequacy and security
3. Commitment to mandatory, annual monitoring and reporting of the prevalence and severity of household food insecurity in each province and territory across Canada, including among vulnerable populations. Measurement of household food insecurity must be included in impact/outcome evaluation of strategies. Data collection and reporting should include:

- mandatory annual data collection using a standardized tool such as the HFSSM - vulnerable populations, all regions; some longitudinal studies
- regular analysis and public reporting of HFI in Canada - include all levels of marginal, moderate and severe food insecurity
- regular evaluation of the impact of poverty reduction strategies - reduce HFI, improve health indicators; maximize reach & impact
- protocols for screening in health care system - identify HFI & poverty, and malnutrition
4. Support for **continued research** to address gaps in knowledge about populations experiencing greater prevalence and severity of household food insecurity and to inform the implementation and evaluation of **strategies and policies** that will eliminate household food insecurity in Canada. Research is needed on topics such as:

- vulnerability amongst populations experiencing more HFI
- social, political and healthcare costs/ benefits of income-based policy responses
- outcome evaluation following implementation of public policy and poverty reduction strategies - measured impacts on HFI and health
DC Role paper: under construction

DC Advocacy
using new position/recommendations:

- Election questions
- Pre-budget submissions
- Social Assistance reviews
- Cost of Healthy Eating (Nutritious Food Basket) reports
- Nutrition North Canada
- Canada’s Healthy Eating Strategy
- Poverty Reduction Strategies
- National Food Policy
- Letters/Discussions with gov’t staff & political reps
- DC reps at policy tables

Role for professional associations:
1) clarify appropriate role for dietitians
2) lobby government, position statements

last slide!
Investigators:
Valerie Tarasuk (PI, U Toronto), Craig Gundersen (co-PI, U Illinois), Lynn McIntyre (U Calgary), Herb Emery (U Calgary), Catherine Mah (Memorial U), Jurgen Rehm (CAMH), Paul Kurdyak (CAMH)

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For emerging research and resources, please visit our website: proof.utoronto.ca
@proofcanada
Upcoming Webinar:
Taking action on the root cause:
Inadequate income and food insecurity

Tuesday, April 18, 2017 1–2:30 p.m. EDT

Presenters:
• Tracy Woloshyn, Public Health Dietitian, York Region Public Health Services (Ontario)
• Christine Johnson, Health Equity Lead, Nova Scotia Health Authority
• Meghan Martin, Community Health Specialist, Fraser Health Authority (British Columbia)

Facilitator: Dianne Oickle, Knowledge Translation Specialist, NCCDH
Please join PROOF and CDPAC for Webinar #3.  
Date and time to be announced next week.

Webinar #3:  
The Relationship between Food Insecurity and Health

Valerie Tarasuk, PhD  
Professor, University of Toronto and principal investigator of PROOF

Lynn McIntyre, MD, MHSc, FRCPC, FCAHS  
Professor Emerita, University of Calgary and PROOF investigator