Navajo Food Security Project

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January 26, 2024
NFS Project

Planning Phase
Local New Mexico Team

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Navajo Nation

- Largest AI reservation in the US, described as food desert
- 10 supermarkets across the NN reservation
- Food sources:
  - Gas stations, Convenience stores, Flea markets, Trading posts
Why Northern Navajo Medical Center?

- One of the 5 federal service units in Navajo Nation
- Discussion with providers at IHS NNMC
- Expressed concern that current FI screening procedure was stigmatizing
- Patients feeling uncomfortable or reluctant
- Develop and evaluate an alternative strengths based and culturally relevant screener
Navajo Food Security Research Project
**Phase I: Qualitative Cognitive Interviews**

**Objective:**
- Develop a new food insecurity screening protocol by exploring the interpretations and preferences for questionnaire content among IHS adult patients during cognitive interviews.

**Sample:**
- Convenience sample of 25 patients at IHS Northern Navajo Medical Center

**Data Collection:**
- 20-minute semi-structured interviews

**Data Analysis:**
- Excerpt coding and discussion

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**Phase II: Integration Instrument Revision**

**Research:**
- Use Table 2 to inform the revision of surveys for the quantitative phase
- Identify theme/ findings and discuss implications for survey procedures

**Revise Instrument:**
- Compile RedCap survey that includes existing and new screener questions

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**Phase III: Quantitative Reliability Study**

**Objective:**
- Assess the equivalent-form reliability of the new protocol in comparison to the existing 2-item food insecurity screener

**Sample:**
- Convenience sample (n=25) patients at IHS Northern Navajo Medical Center

**Data Collection:**
- RedCap survey via tablet with varied ordering of questions

**Data Analysis:**
- Stata/ MP 14.0, cross-tabulations and Pearson correlation coefficients
1. In the past year, did you or your family worry that food would run out before you got money to buy more?
2. In the past year, the food we bought just didn’t last and we didn’t have money to get more. Is this....?
Alternative Screener: Pick a Plate

- 1 = Almost only healthy and traditional Southwest foods
- 2 = Mostly healthy and traditional Southwest foods with some convenience foods
- 3 = About equal amounts of healthy and traditional Southwest foods as convenience foods
- 4 = Mostly convenience foods with some healthy and traditional Southwest foods
- 5 = Almost only convenience foods
(Note: Traditional Southwest foods include: corn, mutton, greens, potatoes, etc. Convenience foods include: canned meat, instant noodles, fast food, and packaged snacks)
Alternative Screener: Satisfaction Level

- 1 = Very Happy
- 2 = Happy
- 3 = Average
- 4 = Unhappy
- 5 = Very Unhappy
Alternative Screener: Amount of Food
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Results
Qualitative
Many participants had personal experience or knew people experiencing food insecurity

“I mean, we'll have enough, but at the very end, I'm squeezing pennies so I can buy the food.”
The words in the existing 2-item food security screener might be confusing or produce shame

“Is this often true, sometimes true... I don't know... When I saw the past year, I'm like, the past year, I don't remember...”

“There was a word, worrying, that got me worried from the money.”
Patients wanted providers to take their time to discuss food security with sensitivity

“Depending the way his tone is and attitude are, it's...They don't say it as a kind way. They just kind of stress you.”
Quantitative
Results & Correlation

- Over 70% of participants responded affirmatively (either “often true” or “sometimes true”) to the existing food insecurity screening questions, indicating risk of food insecurity.
- There was a weak statistical relationship between the new screening questions and food insecurity based on the existing screener.
Discussion

- The existing and new screeners were not strongly associated
  - Questions may be tapping two unique concepts
- Prevalent food access and food insecurity issues
- Interest in efforts to change food security on Navajo Nation
- Ultimately: do we need to screen based on food security?
Ahéhéé, Thank You!

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