The Food Insecurity-Obesity Paradox as a Vicious Cycle for Women

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Full Plate Project – Definitions

- Food insecurity
- ‘Food insecurity-obesity paradox
Full Plate Project – Research Design

- Advisory Committee & Ethnics
- Recruitment & Screening
Full Plate Project – Research Design

➤ Focus Groups & Participants
Findings: Food Security Questionnaire

Food sufficiency question:
- 67% responded that they had enough, but not always the kinds of food they wanted to eat;
- 15% said sometimes they did not have enough to eat, and
- 15% said they often did not have enough to eat

Do you or other household members worry that food would run out before you got money to buy more?
- 37% said this was often true and 48% said this was sometimes true

In response to the statement: “The food we bought just didn’t last, or there wasn’t any money to get more”:
- 30% said this was often true and 48% said it was sometimes true

A combined 93% indicated that they often (52%) or sometimes (41%) “could not afford to eat balanced meals”
Findings: Qualitative Analysis

Figure 4: Food Insecurity-Obesity Paradox as a Vicious Cycle for Women*

What we wanted to find out from the discussions
Findings: Five key themes

- Poverty
- Gaining access to sufficient, nutritious, socially acceptable food
- Linkages to food insecurity, obesity and chronic diseases
- Maternal deprivation: eating less and last
- Experiences of social isolation, vulnerability, stress, dark times, and depression
Poverty
Gaining access to food
Linkages to Food Insecurity, Obesity & Chronic Diseases
Maternal Deprivation: Eating Less and Last
Social Isolation, Vulnerability, Stress, Dark times, Depression
Social Isolation, Vulnerability, Stress, Dark times, Depression

Participants regularly talked about feeling socially isolated, stigmatized, and vulnerable. They spoke about this in the context of being poor, of being lone mothers, of being unattached women living alone, of going to food banks, of being overweight and obese, of being disabled or immobile, of dealing with chronic diseases, of coping with mental health issues, and when dealing with bureaucratic hoops related to government assistance programs, amongst other things.
The complexity of resilience
Conclusions

- When we asked participants what they would ask their Premier to change if given the chance, the recommendations essentially came down to two key elements:

1. They said should receive more money on a monthly basis, i.e. through social assistance or other programs, and

2. There should a better understanding of what it is like to be food insecure in Atlantic Canada. Every group said that their province’s Premier “should live in our shoes and see first-hand what it is like to live like this”.
Right to Food
Thank you
Figure 4: Food Insecurity-Obesity Paradox as a Vicious Cycle for Women*