

Project: Food Security, Health Outcomes and Nutrition Education Among Cambodian Women in Massachusetts

Project Leader: Lorraine Cordeiro

Project Overview

Food insecurity is a broad concept that describes limited or uncertain access to food, including culturally important foods. Food insecurity is linked to multiple poor health outcomes. Resettled refugee populations in the U.S. have persistently high rates of food insecurity, which has implications for long-term health of community members. This study aims to better understand why food insecurity is a persistent issue in an established Cambodian refugee population in MA, to determine factors that moderate good health outcomes in this largely food insecure population, and determine if culturally-tailored nutrition intervention can improve food security and/or dietary practices related to food security.

Activity Summary - 2016

- Nutrition Education Interventions (3)
- Capacity building for Cambodians and students interested in working with multicultural populations at UMass Amherst and in the community (1)
- Food Frequency Questionnaire for use with Cambodian populations (1)
- Cordeiro LS, Sibeko L, and Nelson-Peterman J. Healthful cultural and safety net use among immigrant families in Massachusetts. Submitted to Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health. Revised and resubmitted, October 2016. (1)
- Farrell JA, Cordeiro LS, Qian J, and Nelson-Peterman JL. Food Affordability, Food Security, and the Role of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. Submitted to Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition. Revised and resubmitted, November 2016. (1)
- Nelson-Peterman J, Sibeko L, Cordeiro LS. “Consumption of Cultural and American-style foods among Young women of Cambodian Heritage.” Poster presentation: Experimental Biology, San Diego, CA. April 4, 2016. (1)
- Cordeiro LS and Sibeko L. “Traditional post-partum practices among Cambodian women in Lowell, MA.” Asian Traditional Medicine Panel, sponsored by the Massachusetts Asian American Commission, Lowell General Hospital, and Lowell Community Health Center. Lowell, MA. November 5, 2016. (1)
- Cordeiro LS and Sibeko L. “Black and Brown: Systematic Racism Colors the Maternal and Child Health Experience.” University of the Pacific, Stockton, CA. March 30, 2016. (1)

Total Educational contacts

	Youth Contacts	Adult Contacts
Direct Contacts	12	212
Indirect Contacts (Print, Web, etc...)		

Narrative Summary and Impact

This project has reached 124 hard-to-reach immigrant and refugee women. More than 80% had never participated in research in the past and were willing to continue participation in future studies with us. We found high levels of food insecurity and depression in this population. The community partners have been able to use our data to support their grant writing efforts which in turn will generate funds for service projects.

Several participants requested on-going nutrition education and indicated a high interest in cooking programs.

We presented findings at national conferences and generated two manuscripts which have been submitted for publication.

Collaborating Organizations

- **Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association, Lowell, MA**
- **WIC, Lowell, MA**
- **Lowell Basic Adult Education, Lowell, MA**