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Food Insecurity Among Older Georgians: What the Research Shows


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Outline

- What **research** tells us about the nature, extent, and prevention of food insecurity in older Georgians?
 - Georgia Performance Outcomes Measures Project 6
 - Based on collaboration among:
 - Dept. of Foods and Nutrition, University of Georgia
 - Georgia Division of Aging Services
 - Georgia Aging Services Network
- How to improve food security in older Georgians?
- What difference can we make?



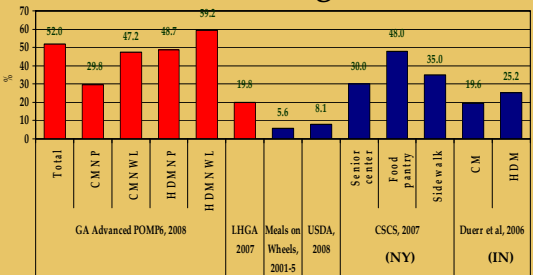
Population Aging and Food Insecurity in Georgia



- **Older population is rapidly growing in Georgia**
 - Implications on programs and policies in food assistance, public health, and healthcare
- **Food insecurity is a hidden and unique problem in older adults**
 - High prevalence!
 - Caused by persistent poverty, health, physical limitation, social support, and other problems
 - Resulted in deleterious consequences on nutrition, physical and mental health, and quality of life

U.S. Census Bureau 2008; Lee JS et al, 2010, Ziliak JP et al, 2008, 2009

Prevalence of Food Insecurity in Older Georgians





| Category | Prevalence (%) |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| Total | 52.0 |
| CMNP | 29.6 |
| CMNWL | 47.2 |
| HDMNP | 48.7 |
| HDMNWL | 59.2 |
| LHGA 2007 | 19.8 |
| Meals on Wheels, 2001-5 | 5.6 |
| USDA, 2008 | 8.1 |
| Senior center | 30.0 |
| Food pantry | 48.0 |
| Sidewalk | 35.0 |
| CM | 19.6 |
| HDM | 25.2 |

MOWAA: Meals on Wheels Association of America
 CSCC: Council of Senior Centers and Service of New York city
 Duerr L. J Nutr Elder. 25(3/4):261(2), 2006
 Ziliak JP et al (2008). The causes, consequences, and future of senior hunger in America. [http://216.235.203.153/Document.Doc?id=13]

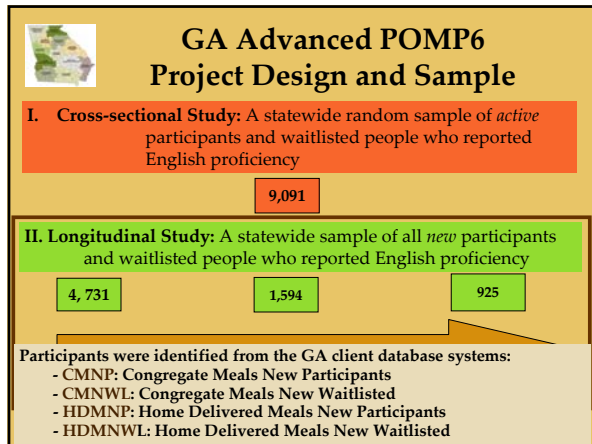
How to Improve Food Security of Older Georgians?

- **Measure and monitor** food insecurity
 - Georgia Department of Human Services
 - State aging information systems
- **Improve** food & nutrition assistance
 - Capacity
 - Coordination
 - Delivery
 - Access
 - Participation
- **Reduce poverty** and improve economic security
 - Root causes of food insecurity

GA Advanced Performance Outcomes Measures Project 6 (GA Advanced POMP6)

- A cooperative research project between the GA Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services (DAS) and Dept. Foods and Nutrition, Univ. Georgia (UGA)
- To measure the impact of the OANP on food security and nutritional health among older Georgians using both cross-sectional and longitudinal sub-studies
- **Specific focus on the inclusion of:**
 - Longitudinal study design
 - Comparable comparison group: the waitlisted
 - Food insecurity: USDA national standard measure



- ## Study Measures
- **Survey measures:**
 - Food insecurity: A modified validated 6-item US Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM) (Blumberg et al, 1999)
 - Nutrition risk: A modified GA Nutrition Screening Initiative DETERMINE Checklist (GANSI)
 - Food group intake, food acquisition, physical and mental health, supplement use, etc.
 - Other nutritional health measures developed or adapted from previously validated survey tools
 - Selected sociodemographics
 - **Client database system measures:**
 - Sociodemographics (race, gender, poverty, education, living arrangement, etc)
 - Other aging services usage patterns

Food Insecurity Measure: Modified 6-item HFSSM

Food Security Questions

These next questions are about the food eaten in your household in the last 30 days and whether you were able to afford the food you need.

13. During the last 30 days, how often was this statement true:
The food that we bought just didn't last, and we didn't have money to get more.
(1) Often (2) Sometimes (3) Never

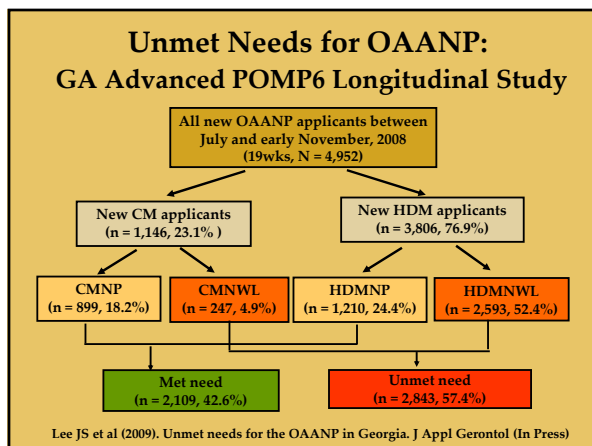
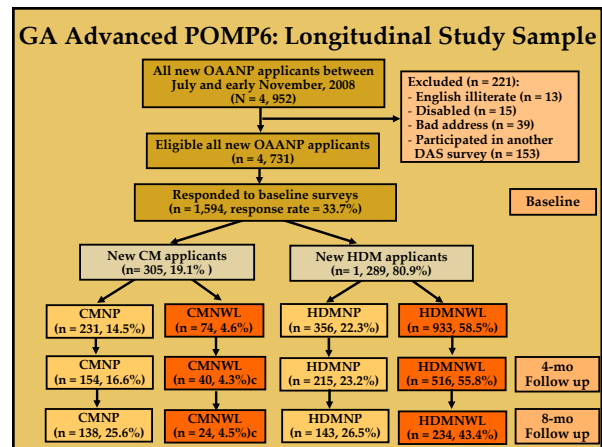
14. During the last 30 days, how often was this statement true:
We couldn't afford to eat balanced meals.
(1) Often (2) Sometimes (3) Never

15. In the past 30 days, did you or other adults in your household ever cut the size of your meals because there wasn't enough money for food?
(1) Yes, on 3 or more days (2) Yes, on 1 or 2 days (3) No

16. In the past 30 days, did you or other adults in your household ever skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?
(1) Yes, on 3 or more days (2) Yes, on 1 or 2 days (3) No

17. In the last 30 days, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money to buy food?
(1) Yes (2) No

18. In the last 30 days, were you ever hungry but didn't eat because you couldn't afford enough food?
(1) Yes (2) No



GA Advanced POMP6: Characteristics of Longitudinal Study Sample

| Mean ± SD or % | CM NP | CM NWL | HDM NP | HDM NWL |
|------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Age, yrs* | 74.7±9.6 | 71.1±8.4 | 76.1±9.5 | 74.2±9.5 |
| Female | 75.3 | 65.8 | 66.9 | 67.7 |
| Black* | 28.6 | 22.0 | 28.9 | 32.5 |
| <12yr education* | 32.7 | 58.0 | 48.7 | 57.8 |
| < 130% FPL* | 57.2 | 69.5 | 56.7 | 67.0 |
| Receiving FS* | 15.0 | 27.0 | 17.5 | 27.0 |
| Rural residents* | 26.4 | 44.6 | 22.5 | 18.4 |

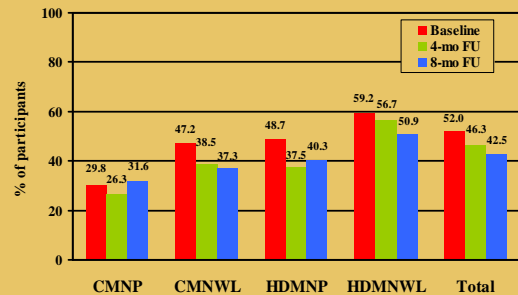
FPL: Federal Poverty Level, FS: Food Stamp Program
*Significantly different by group at p<0.05

GA Advanced POMP6: Food Insecurity of Longitudinal Study Sample

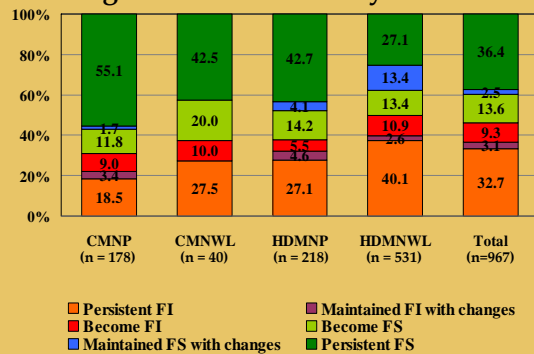
| % | CMNP | CMNWL | HDMNP | HDMNWL |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Food didn't last* | 32.1 | 43.7 | 50.4 | 61.1 |
| Can't afford balanced meals* | 33.8 | 55.7 | 56.8 | 66.1 |
| Cut meal size* | 21.7 | 66.2 | 27.3 | 37.4 |
| Skipped meals* | 13.6 | 47.2 | 20.3 | 29.0 |
| Ate less* | 16.1 | 29.2 | 23.7 | 36.7 |
| Hungry* | 8.5 | 16.7 | 15.9 | 23.6 |
| Food insecure* | 29.8 | 47.2 | 48.7 | 59.2 |

*Significantly different by group at p<0.05

GA Advanced POMP6: Food Insecurity of Longitudinal Study Sample

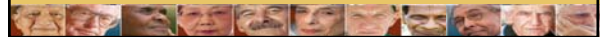


GA Advanced POMP6: Changes in Food Insecurity over 8-mo



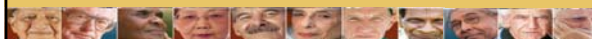
Food Insecurity in Older Georgians

- 52% of older Georgians seeking Older Americans Act Nutrition Program (OAANP) were food insecure
- Older Georgians participating in the OAANP were two times more likely to achieve food security in 8 months than those who were on the waiting list
- Food insecurity is a powerful and sensitive outcome measure for meal programs
- However, unmet need for the OAANP in Georgia
 - 60% of those seeking the OAANP had to wait for meals
 - With more resources, OAANP can help to reduce food insecurity in older Georgians



Recommendations for Measuring Food Security in Older Adults

- **Routinely and systematically collect food insecurity across the aging network**
- **Monitor food insecurity at finer geographic levels at short time intervals**
- **Use the consensus concept, definition, and nationally standardized and validated measures of food insecurity**
- **Establish appropriate methodology and systems to measure, monitor, and track performance of meal services**
- **Conduct more feasibility and evaluation studies**



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Food Assistance Programs in Northeast Georgia AAA & UGA: USDA Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Senior Center Brown Bag Program




USDA Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program: Since 2007



- Federally-funded program which provides fresh, locally-grown produce to low-income older adults
 - ≥ 60 years of age
 - Income ≤ 185% of the federal poverty guidelines
- Eligible seniors receive vouchers to exchange for produce with USDA-certified farmers
- Receive nutrition education regarding fruits and vegetables


Sinnott S, Bengle R, Reddy S, Johnson MA, Lee JS (2009). The USDA Senior Farmers' market Nutrition Program: inclusion of older adults participating in the home-delivered meals program in northeast Georgia. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 41(4S), pS1

Senior Center Brown Bag Program in Northeast GA: 2007-2008




- Incorporated principles of the federal Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and WIC Program
- Provided healthy foods that are lacking in the diets of older adults attending senior centers in northeast Georgia
- Foods were provided in brown bags through senior centers in northeast GA

April 23 - May 3, 2007



April 28 - May 2, 2008



Brown bags include:

- fresh fruits and vegetables
- shelf-stable healthy foods such as low-sugar canned fruits, brown rice, whole grain cereal, and low-fat canned chicken, no salt added canned vegetables
- recipes using the foods

“In the past year, have you wanted to apply for food stamps, but found the process too difficult?”

- “I couldn't get there—transportation issues.”
- “I had birth certificate issues because I changed my name. They had new people working there.”
- “They want to know too much and do not provide enough stamps to make the process worth it.”
- “The paperwork and to get the information together to be denied...TOO HARD!”
- “I tried a few years ago and was turned down but do not know why. I will not apply again because of the initial rejection.”
- “I wouldn't even get \$10.00, so I decided it wasn't worth it.”

Northeast Georgia Annual Evaluation, Senior Centers, UGA, 2009

“In the past year, have you wanted to apply for food stamps, but found the process too difficult?” (continued)

- “I wanted to apply but wouldn't get them—I'm not eligible because of social security.”
- “I have too many people in my house.”
- “The qualifications are too high!”
- “They say I have too much of an income—I have a son who is paralyzed and must live off of the income.”
- “I wanted to apply but wouldn't get them—I'm not eligible because of social security.”
- “I didn't get enough, so I didn't apply.”
- “I am currently on food stamps, but I don't get enough to help.”
- “I am currently on food stamps but do not get enough stamps and need more financial help.”

Northeast Georgia Annual Evaluation, Senior Centers, UGA, 2009

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