Concurrent Session 1

Municipal dimensions and opportunities for improving food security in an urban area

B Wood, P Streker

Community and Health Development, City of Port Phillip, VIC 3182

**Background** - Long term food security issues have been identified in the inner urban area of the City of Port Phillip (CoPP). Creative strategies are required to enable more people within the City to secure, regular, adequate, nutritious and culturally acceptable food and improved food security.

**Objective** - To scope the dimensions and opportunities for improving food security in the CoPP.

**Design** - A generic outline and checklist\(^1\) to support whole of population and sustainable food security through the local food system and the Municipal Public Health Planning Framework was trialed and modified through stakeholder interviews and search of secondary data sources.

**Outcomes** - In the stakeholder interviews, gentrification, transport barriers and inequitable local food access were considered to be three of the main reasons affecting community food security. The groups most at risk of food security problems are the most vulnerable (families in poverty, younger people, older people, Kooris, ethnic groups, people with disability, homeless people, alcohol and drug users, and street sex workers). As a large collective group (estimated to be 32% of the total population of CoPP), their physical and mental health needs for user friendly neighbourhood food supplies, public and community transport and infrastructure requires serious consideration. The Municipal Public Health Planning Framework checklist, with food security overlay for the food chain system provided a method of identifying the natural, built, economic, socio-cultural and health dimensions, and in turn generated municipal opportunities for improving food security.\(^2\)

**Conclusion** - Application of this method for scoping food security (community, household, individual) in an inner city urban environment has identified multiple opportunities for improving food security, many of which are low cost. Further trial of the method in a variety of other local government locations is indicated.

**References**


---

How well do Australian preschool children’s food preferences match consumption recommendations?

CG Russell, A Worsley

Centre for Physical Activity and Nutrition Research, Deakin University, Victoria, Australia

**Background** - Children’s food choices are often directed primarily by their liking or disliking for a given food. Accordingly, a better understanding of how children’s food preferences match or differ from dietary recommendations may assist in the development of strategies to improve the nutrient quality of children’s food consumption.

**Objective** - To examine to what extent Australian children’s food preferences comply with dietary recommendations, and the impact of socio-demographic factors on this association.

**Design** - Cross sectional survey. Four hundred and five parents of children aged 2-5 years, recruited from three socio-economic groups in Melbourne and Adelaide completed a survey on their child’s liking for 176 foods and drinks on a 5-point Likert scale in addition to demographic descriptors. Preferences were compared to aspects of the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

**Outcomes** - Foods in the Extra Foods group of the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating were liked the most (mean = 4.02), closely followed by the Cereals group (mean = 4.01). Foods in the Vegetables group were liked the least (mean = 4.30). A large percentage of foods in the Cereals group was liked (64%) in contrast to the other food groups, especially Vegetables (7%). Two-tailed Spearman’s Rho correlations showed that children liked foods that were more energy dense (rho=0.40, \(P<0.01\)) and higher in saturated fat (rho=0.28, \(P <0.01\)) but not those higher in sugar (rho=0.18, \(P =0.02\)), fat (rho=0.12, \(P = 0.12\)) or sodium (rho=0.14, \(P = 0.07\)). Relationships between demographic variables (e.g. SES, parental education, child’s gender, breast/bottle feeding) and food preferences were generally weak.

**Conclusions** - Interventions designed to help preschool children improve compliance with dietary guidelines may be enhanced by addressing children’s low preferences for Vegetables and high preferences for Extra Foods, and foods higher in saturated fat and energy density.