

# Food for Thought: A Qualitative Evaluation of Caregiver Preferences for Food Insecurity Screening and Resource Referral

#### Date:

Apr 2020 Visit Article

Although there is growing interest in screening for Food Insecurity (FI) in the clinical setting, little research exists describing the effect of screening practices on caregiver comfort and willingness to disclose social risk, or what factors affect eventual engagement with food resources. In this qualitative study, we conducted 40 semistructured interviews with caregivers of pediatric patients who reported FI in the Emergency Department of an urban, freestanding children's hospital. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. We used content analysis with constant comparison to code interviews inductively and identified emerging themes through an iterative process. Three primary themes emerged as factors affecting caregiver comfort in FI screening and engagement with resources: perceived negative repercussions associated with screening, perception of need, and effective connection with food resources. While most caregivers reported comfort with FI screening, intentional steps to provide anonymity and reduce stigma in the screening process were important in facilitating disclosure of social need. Engagement with resources was influenced by caregiver prioritization of food access within a milieu of life stressors, and the perception of personal need relative to their peers. Furthermore, caregivers suggested practices to facilitate effective connection with food resources such as use of mobile health technology, geographically based resources, and personalized connections. This study demonstrates the importance of screening methods that reduce judgement and preserves caregiver privacy, referring families to resources that are geographically accessible, and developing creative strategies that enhance families' connection to resources, such as with use of mobile technology.

#### Journal:

Academic Pediatrics
Authors:

Cullen D, Attridge M, Fein JA

## **Topics**

Equitable Access to Services

### **Related Content**

Complete Eats: Summer Meals Offered by the Emergency Department for Food Insecurity
USDA Request for Public Comment: Requirements for National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs
USDA Request for Public Comment: SNAP Requirements for Able-bodied Adults Without Dependents
Food for Thought: A Randomized Trial of Food Insecurity Screening in the Emergency Department
Hungry for Information: Lessons Learned from Food Insecurity Screening in Pediatrics
Food for Thought: How We Screen for Food Insecurity Matters
Screening for Social Needs in Pediatrics: How Can We Ensure it is Family-centered and Effective?