

3031.0: Monday, October 22, 2001 - Board 1

Abstract #29697

Identifying food insecurity in homeless families

Pamella Darby, MPH, RD1, Elizabeth Fassberg1, Peter Sherman, MD1, Roy Grant2, and Irwin Redlener, MD1. (1) Division of Community Pediatrics, The Children's Hospital at Montefiore/ Albert Einstein College of Medicine, 317 East 64th Street, New York, NY 10021, 212-535-9779, pdarby@montefiore.org, (2) The Children's Health Fund, 317 East 64th Street, New York, NY 10021

Homeless women and children are assumed to be food insecure, but no survey has documented the prevalence of food insecurity or hunger in this population. The New York Children's Health project is one of the largest providers of comprehensive health care to homeless families, with more than 10,000 medical visits per year. The short form of the United States Department of Agriculture 12-month Food Security Scale was adapted, for use in a group setting, to assess baseline food insecurity for a group of sheltered homeless mother (n=31). Of the 31 women surveyed, 16 (52%) were food insecure with 10 (32%) classified as food insecure with hunger evident. When we look at the data by shelter, the shelter with access to emergency food resources on-site and connected with emergency food providers in the neighborhood, the rate of food insecurity decreases tremendously to 9.5%. The adapted food security scale proved effective as a screening tool. Knowing the prevalence of food insecurity in the population allowed us to plan interventions to target immediate needs of families in need of food and plan for training of shelter staff around food insecurity and hunger.

Learning Objectives: At the conclusion of the session, each participant will be able to: 1) Identify factors which place homeless children and families at higher risk of food insecurity. 2) Identify tools which can be adapted to assess food insecurity.

Keywords: Food Security, Homeless

The 129th Annual Meeting of APHA