

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

Association between food insecurities and emotional distress  
among Adolescents

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
For the degree of Master of Public Health in Applied Epidemiology

By

Susana Ramirez

May 2021

The graduate project of Susana Ramirez is approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Bobbie Emetu

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Bethany Rainisch

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Myriam Forster, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Table of Contents

Signature Page	ii
Abstract	iv

## Abstract

### Association between food insecurities and emotional distress among Adolescents

By

Susana Ramirez

Master of Public Health in Applied Epidemiology

**Objective:** The purpose of this study is to examine the association between food insecurity and emotional distress in adolescents. Are there any gender differences between food insecurity and having emotional distress? This study hypothesized that: Adolescents who experience food insecurities have a higher prevalence of experiencing emotional distress. Females who have food insecurity will have higher odds of experiencing emotional distress compared to males adjusting for gender, socioeconomic status, health status, age, and ethnicity. **Methods:** NHIS is a cross-sectional dataset, that target adolescents ages 5-17. Chi-squares were used to test the association between emotional distress by gender and food insecurity by gender. A multivariate logistic regression was used to hypothesize the relationship between food insecurity and emotional distress adjusting for gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, and health status. The Hosmer and Lemeshow test (H&L) and likelihood ratio test (LRT) was used for model fit. **Results:** There were a total of 9,193 participants for the NHIS dataset. Results indicated females have higher odds of experiencing emotional distress compared to males when adjusting for the other covariates. [AOR: 1.644, 95% CI: 1.179-2.293]. There is no significant change with food insecurity on emotional distress when gender intercepts [AOR: .874, 95% CI: .445-1.716]. **Conclusion:** Further studies should follow-up on adolescents as they become adults. Providing resources, can help adolescents learn more about regulating and controlling emotions as they get older, to prevent any health issues that could arise when these adolescents become adults.