

Ability of US Food Pantries to Address the Needs of Persons on a Medically-Necessary Diet

Authors: Emily Johnson, Alex McNair, MS, Angela Fraser, PhD
Co-authors: Diana Pitman, Dukes McCoy, Julia Blouin, MS, Carly Jones, Amalia Diaz, McKenzie Mader, Ashley Verdonk, Erin Irons, Grace Pascarella, Grace Anderson, Emma Anderson, Sydney Matteson

Abstract

Objectives (purpose): Food insecurity is a growing public health problem in the United States. The charitable feeding network (i.e., food banks, food pantries) aims to reduce food insecurity by increasing access to food. The problem becomes exacerbated for those who are food insecure and have a chronic disease which affects approximately 60% of U.S. adults. Most chronic diseases are not curable so must be managed through lifestyle changes, including adherence to a specialized diet. Our objective was to determine if and how U.S. food pantries are actively providing medically-necessary foods.

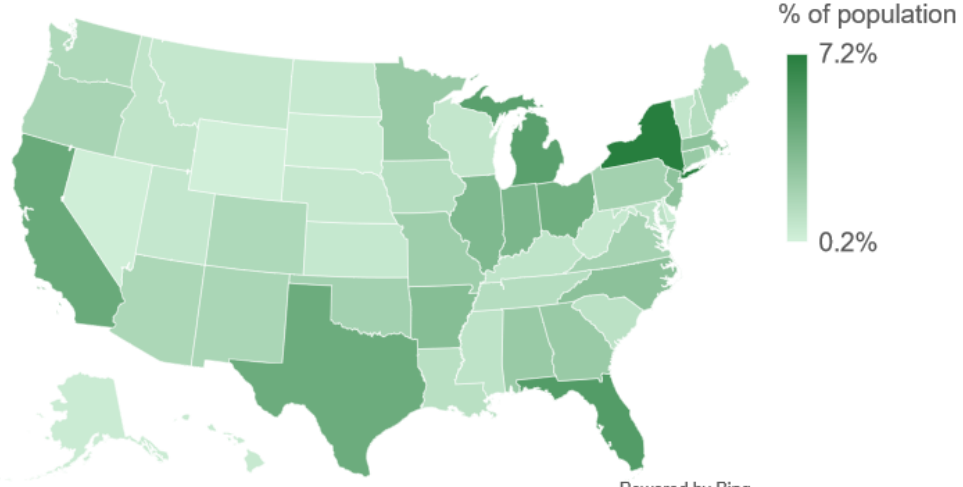
Design: Cross-sectional, descriptive survey study

Methods and Instruments: Our target population was U.S. food pantries (N=15,406). A sample of 2,507 food pantries was selected using a stratified randomized sampling approach. A 60-item survey was administered using Qualtrics. Descriptive and inferential statistics were performed for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data.

Results and Conclusions: An 18.59% response rate (N=466) was achieved, however, the number of responses varied by survey item. 55% (n=225) of pantries reported clients requested food for a diet-related medical conditions, but only 22% (n=104) actively sourced foods for those with a diet-related medical condition. In addition, 51% (n=236) reported it was difficult to provide for those clients. Only 20% (n=78/393) had access to a Registered Dietitian. Results suggest there is a need to provide support (e.g., training and guidance) about how to more effectively offer medically-necessary foods.

Conflict of Interest/funding disclosure statement: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Percentage of Food Pantries in U.S. by State



Powered by Bing
© GeoNames, Microsoft, TomTom