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Characterization of household food insecurity in QuÃ©bec: food and feelings

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Abstract

This study was undertaken to understand food insecurity from the perspective of households who experienced it. The results of group interviews and personal interviews with 98 low-income households from urban and rural areas in and around QuÃ©bec City, Canada, elicited the meaning of "enough food" for the households and the range of manifestations of food insecurity. Two classes of manifestations characterized the experience of food insecurity: (1) its core characteristics: a lack of food encompassing the shortage of food, the unsuitability of both food and diet and a preoccupation with continuity in access to enough food; and a lack of control of households over their food situation; and (2) a related set of potential reactions: socio-familial perturbations, hunger and physical impairment, and psychological suffering. The results substantiate the existence of food insecurity among QuÃ©becers and confirm that the nature of this experience is consistent with many of the core components identified in upstate New

York. This study underlines the monotony of the diet, describes the feeling of alienation, differentiates between a lack of food and the reactions that it engenders, and emphasizes the dynamic nature of the experience.



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Keywords

Canada; Food insecurity; Hunger; Psychological distress; Grounded theory

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