The Role of Self-Efficacy in Increasing Food Security Among Participants of a New Food Pantry Model in Hartford, CT

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Abstract
Background: Food insecurity is defined as not having the resources to obtain enough safe, nutritionally adequate food in socially acceptable ways to support an active, healthy life. A new approach to emergency food assistance is needed, and researchers have encouraged the exploration of empowerment, self-efficacy, and goal setting as a means of better understanding and preventing food insecurity. Objective: The study aim is to examine the association between food insecurity and self-efficacy, and evaluate the ability of a new food pantry model (Freshplace) to increase the food security and self-efficacy of members. Methods: A randomized control trial comparing Freshplace to a control group was completed. The survey instrument used for the evaluation included a new self-efficacy for food security scale and the USDA Food Security Module. Results: Cronbach α tests demonstrated that the self-efficacy scale was reliable. There was a significant positive association between self-efficacy and food security at baseline (P = .004) and at 3 months (P = .02). A positive relationship between Freshplace participation and not reporting very low food security was observed at 3 months (P = .05). There was a significant association between study group and self-efficacy status at 6 months (P = .001). Conclusion: The results of this study reveal an opportunity to further refine the Freshplace program to more effectively promote food security and help food pantry members become more self-sufficient. This study suggests that methods to increase self-efficacy will be an essential component of the evidence-based food pantry model resulting from this research.

Recommended Citation

Additional Files

Colantonio_MPHThesis_2013_Figure4.pdf (117 kB)

Figure 4

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Compared with food-secure respondents, people who were food insecure had poorer self-rated health, more frequent poor physical and mental health days, higher BMI, and higher prevalence of diabetes, smoking, depressive symptoms, and every type of functional limitation (Table 1). Prevalence of severe depressive symptoms was almost 4 times higher among people who were food insecure than among those who were not. Robaina KA, Martin KS. Food insecurity, poor diet quality, and obesity among food pantry participants in Hartford, CT.