

Monitoring people's experience with food insecurity: Importance globally and in Scotland

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Nourish Scotland Conference 2014, Glasgow



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

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VOICES
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HUNGRY



DEPARTMENTS

Agriculture and Consumer Protection

Fisheries and Aquaculture

Economic and Social
Development

Technical
Cooperation

Forestry

Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN - 5 strategic objectives

1. Eradicate hunger and malnutrition

2. Make agriculture, forests and fisheries more productive and sustainable

3. Reduce rural poverty

4. Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems

5. Increase the resilience of livelihoods to disasters



Food Security, Food Insecurity and Myths to dispel

Food Security: all people at all times have physical & economic access to adequate amounts of nutritious, safe, and culturally appropriate foods

Food Insecurity: the state of being without reliable access to sufficient affordable, nutritious food

Several myths to dispel:

- a) It is difficult to measure food security status of people
- b) Only “poor” countries have a food security problem
- c) Being food insecure is incompatible with being overweight or obese

Social determinants of food security

Food insecurity persists even in countries with ample food supplies.

Social barriers to food access may include:

- Gender inequality
- Socioeconomic status
- Race or ethnicity
- Social minority or marginalized group (class, caste, immigrant, refugee, etc.)
- Elderly/youth - led households
- Disabled
- Isolated
- Lack of education /employment

Voices of the Hungry project for measuring food insecurity

- FAO has developed an measurement system for validly and comparably measuring food insecurity at different levels of severity, which consists of the **Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)** and a **global standard** for cross country comparisons.
- The FIES is based on experience-based scales for measuring the severity of food insecurity that have evolved over the past 20 years in the US, Canada and many Latin American countries.

Global implementation of the FIES

- FIES included within the Gallup® World Poll (GWP) since 2014 - nationally-representative annual survey of individual adults conducted in over 140 countries since 2005.
- Using analytical methods developed by FAO, comparable rates of food insecurity across countries will be produced in a timely and frequent manner, **indispensable for monitoring achievement on reducing food insecurity.**
- Analysing FIES with other variables from the GWP allows for **research** into how food insecurity is related to other aspects of people's lives and gives a more holistic picture of the experience of being food insecure.

FIES questionnaire included in the Gallup World Poll

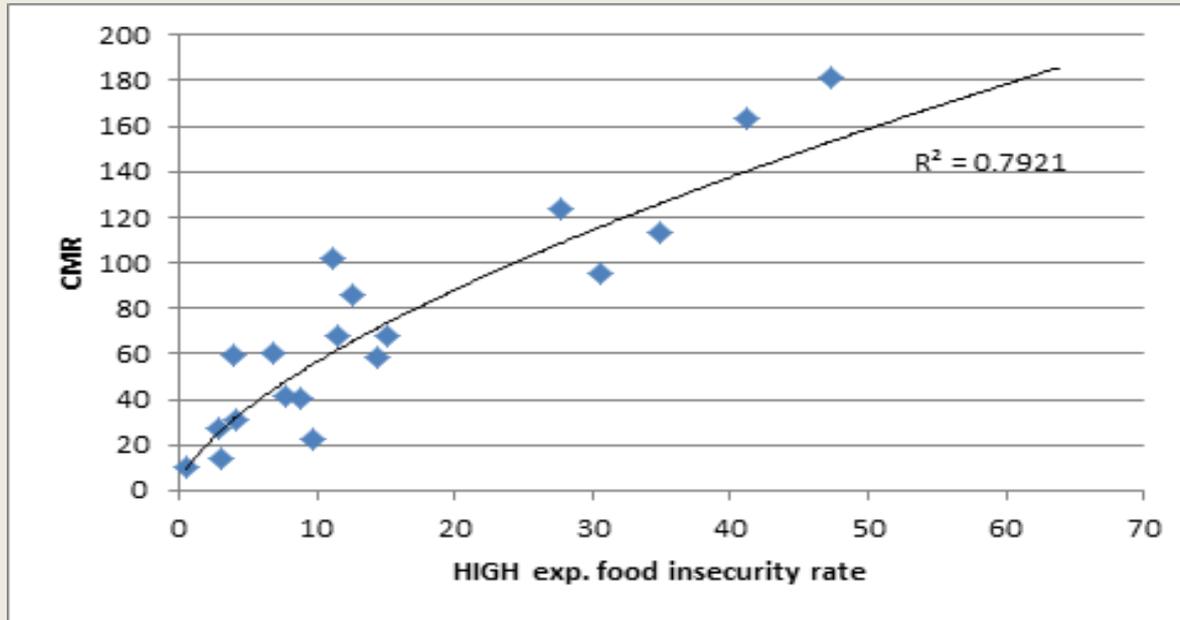
“During the last 12 months, was there a time when, because of lack of money or other resources:

1. You were worried you would not have enough food to eat?
2. You were unable to eat healthy and nutritious food?
3. You ate only a few kinds of foods?
4. You had to skip a meal?
5. You ate less than you thought you should?
6. Your household ran out of food?
7. You were hungry but did not eat?
8. You went without eating for a whole day?

Innovation of the FIES measurement system

- This project will produce estimates of food insecurity at different levels of severity (mild / moderate or severe) at national or sub-national level in a **comparable** way, based on a global standard.
- The FIES has been recommended by Rome-based UN agencies as monitoring indicator for the post 2015 SDG agenda.

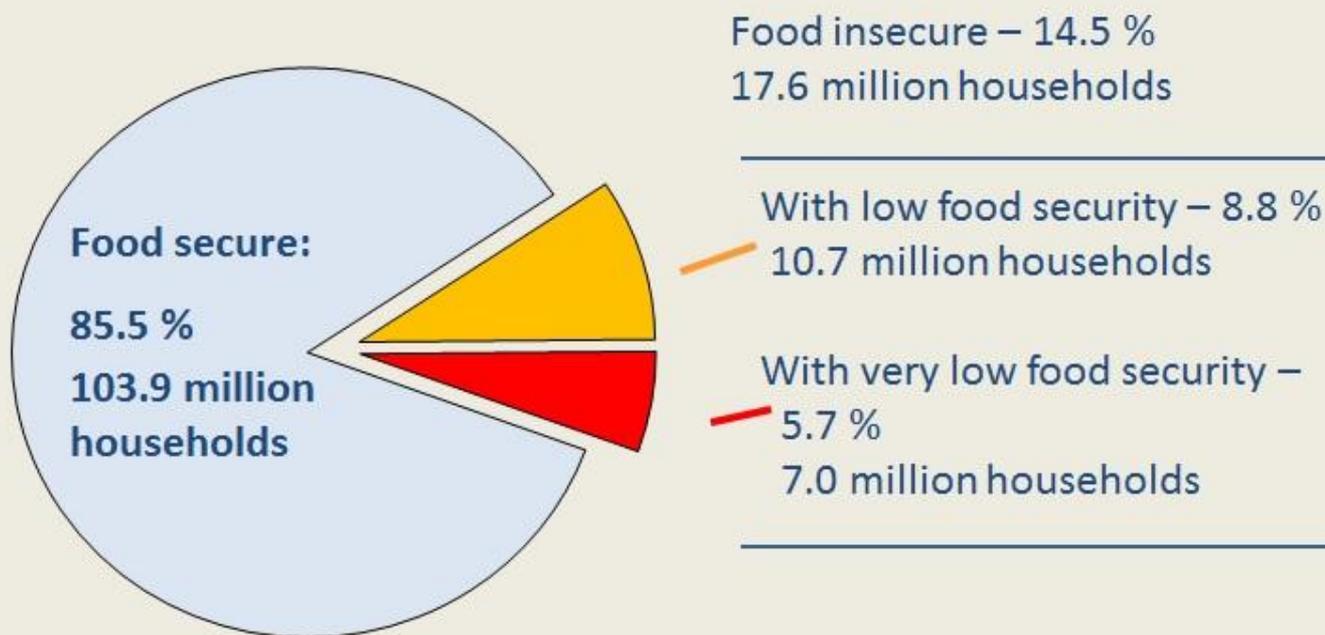
Food insecurity is associated with malnutrition and child mortality



Early results of the VoH 2014 data

Food insecurity in the land of plenty?

U.S. Households by Food Security Status, 2012



The association between food insecurity and excess weight gain

Food insecurity, defined as poor access to food, may lead to the “unexpected” observation of overweight/obesity, both in resource-rich countries and in populations traditionally vulnerable to undernutrition.

Food insecurity in the land of overweight people?

Research showing food insecure adults and children are more likely to be overweight/obese

In the US, studies have shown that women living in food insufficient households had higher rates of overweight than those in food sufficient households. Similar results have been shown for children 12 to 19 years of age

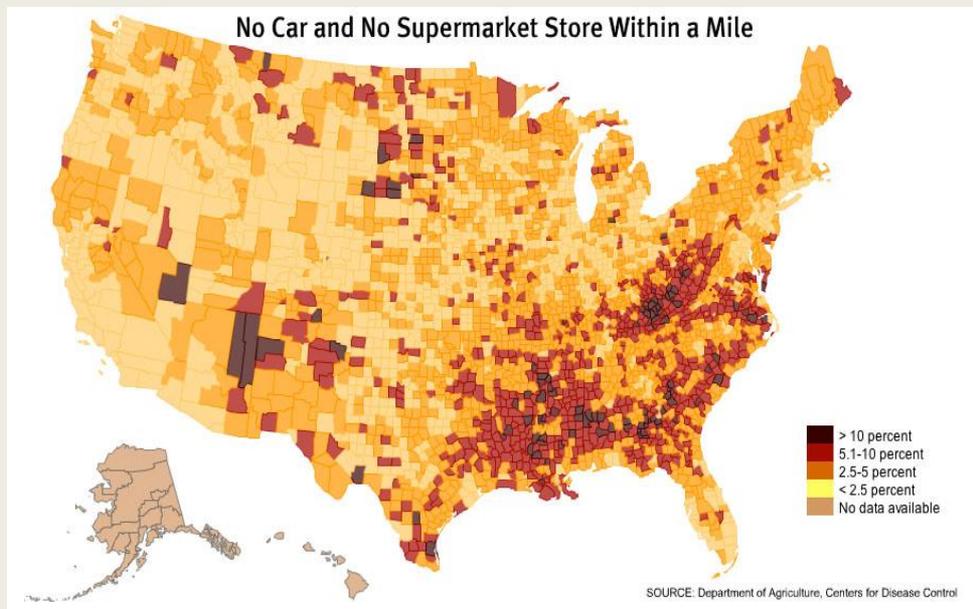


Diet quality, food security and excess weight – what is known?

- A number of studies have shown that both household and individual diets may be of inferior quality due to food insecurity.
- Related to limitations in both physical and economic access to affordable healthy foods.
- “Governments and health authorities should use all possible methods, including legislation and statutory regulation, to halt and reverse the replacement of minimally processed foods and processed culinary ingredients by ultra-processed food products.”
(C. Monteiro)



Food deserts



FOOD DESERTS ARE FAILURES OF THE FOOD SYSTEM AND FOOD ENVIRONMENT

Food deserts are defined as parts of the country with little or no supply of fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, usually found in impoverished areas.

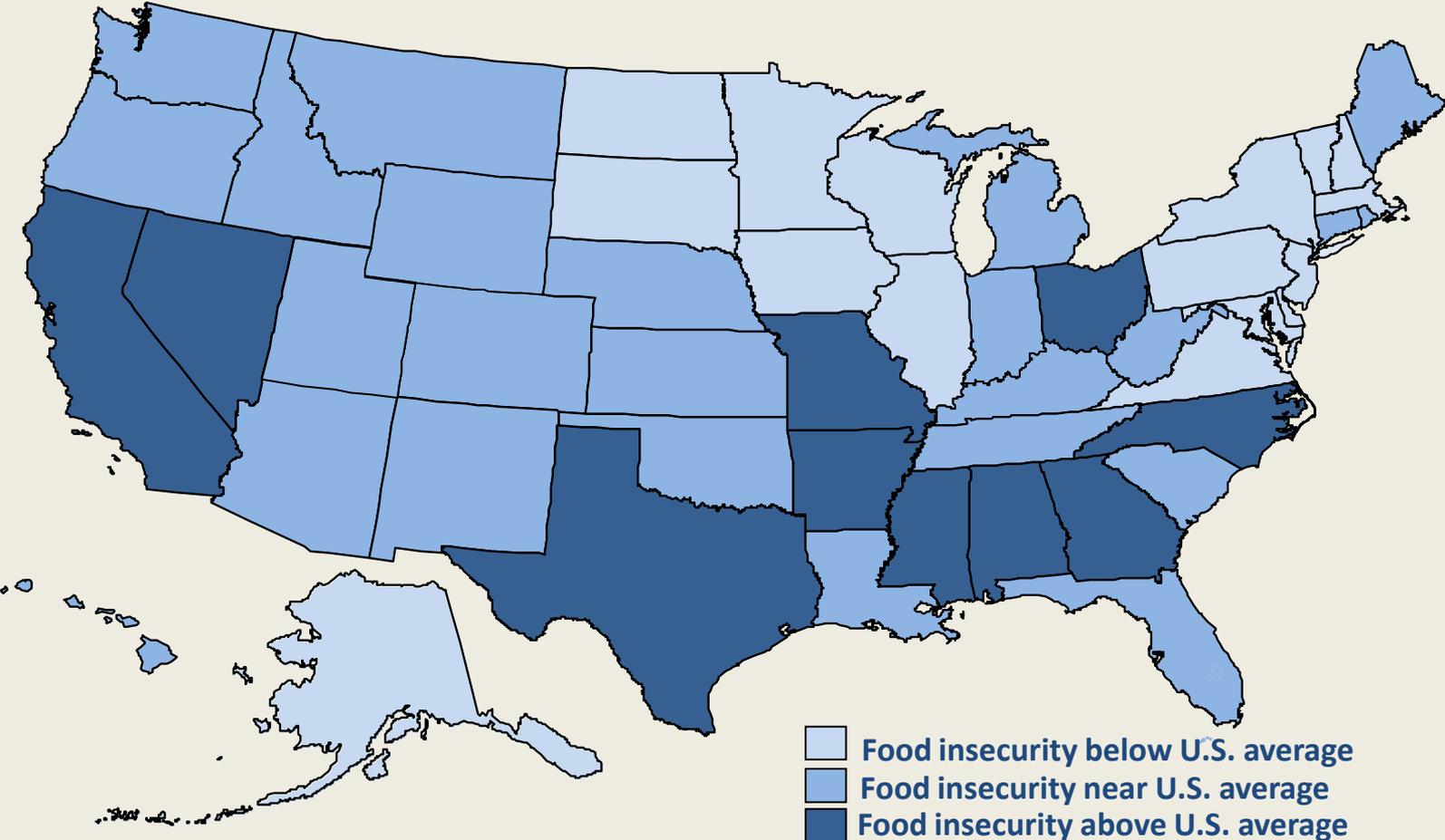
This is largely due to a **lack of grocery stores, farmers' markets, and healthy food providers**, with an **excess of fast food outlets**.

Importance of monitoring food insecurity in populations with high levels of excess weight

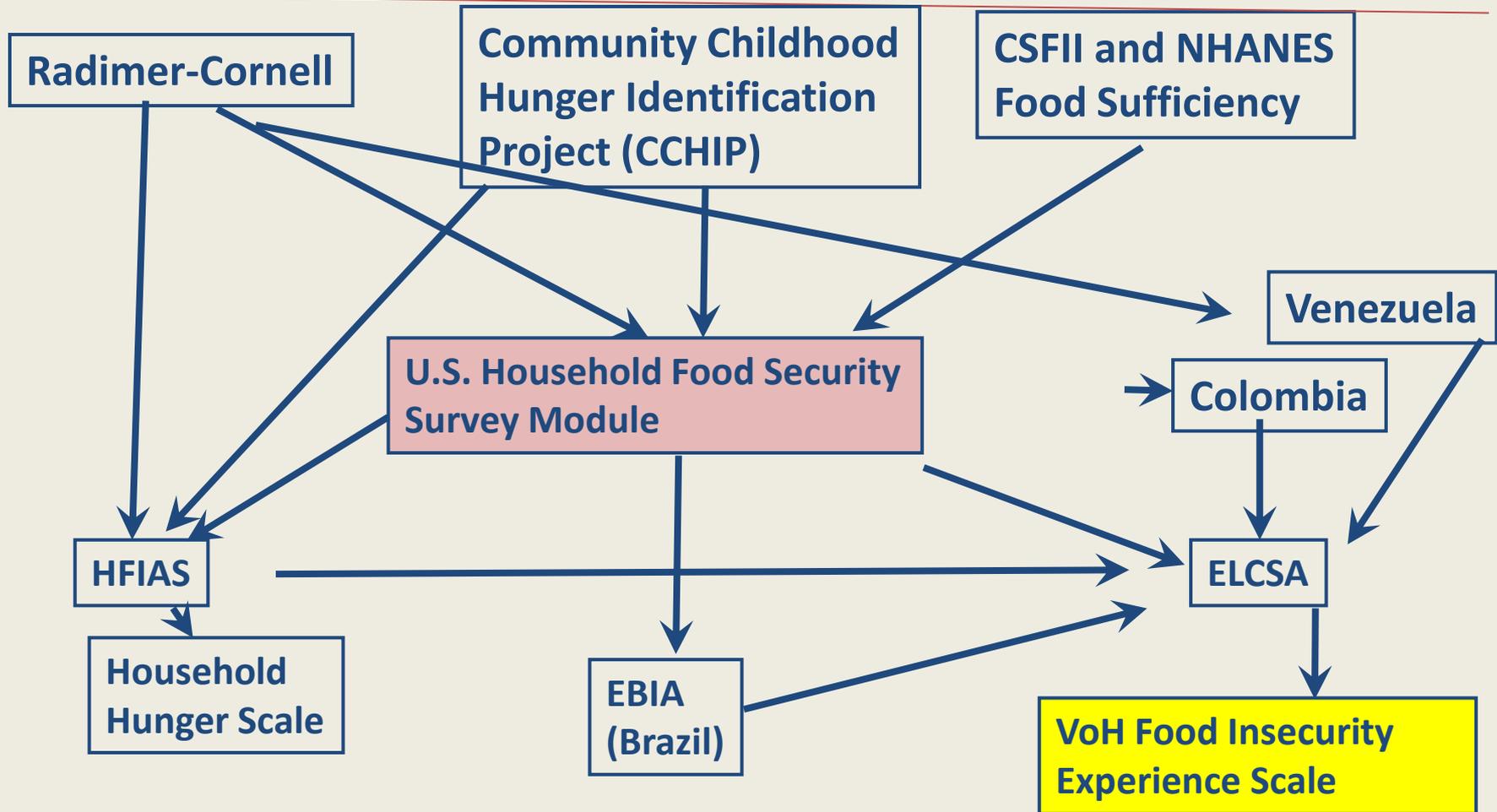
- Overweight and obesity are risk factors for morbidity, disability and mortality from chronic diseases.
- Food insecure and poor persons at risk of chronic diseases have fewer means for prevention and treatment such as accessing health care and improving diets.
- The FIES questionnaire could be included in the **Scottish Health Survey** to better highlight causal factors for poor health/nutrition and better identify populations vulnerable to food insecurity.

Thank you for your attention

Prevalence of food insecurity by State, average 2010-2012



Evolution of Experiential Measures of Household Food Security



Excess weight and food insecurity – evidence from around the world

Obesity and the nutrition transition in Sub-Saharan Africa. Nelia P. Steyn and Zandile J. Mchiza
ANNALS OF THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, Issue: *The Year in Diabetes and Obesity*, 2014

Household food insecurity and excess weight/ obesity among Brazilian women and children: a life-course approach. *Cad. Saúde Pública, Rio de Janeiro, 29(2):219-241, fev, 2013*

Food Insecurity Is not Associated With Lower Energy Intakes . 2008 North American Association for the Study of Obesity (NAASO).
“Total energy intakes were not different for food insecure individuals; however, their meal and snack behaviors were different. Focusing solely on total energy intake would miss important consequences of food insecurity.”