

Mapping Nutrition Intake Among Homeless Young People in Jerusalem

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Abstract:

Background: In Israel, “unhoused,” young adults form a vulnerable population at elevated risk for nutrition insecurity. Describing gaps between Israel Ministry of Health nutrition recommendations and actual nutrition intake in this population is an essential step towards developing evidence-based interventions.

Objectives: The present cross-sectional study was designed to map nutrition status and nutrition insecurity among unhoused young adults (18–26 years of age), living in Jerusalem, and to examine the gap between their nutrition intake and Israel Ministry of Health nutrition recommendations.

Methods: Each participant underwent a 24-hour dietary intake interview. Additionally, participants responded to a questionnaire that queried anthropometric measures, demographic characteristics and social background.

Results: The study population was comprised of 30 unhoused young adults, 50% female, mean age 22±3 years. Participant body mass index was 23.8±0.6, within recommended values. Actual dietary intake significantly exceeded Israel Ministry of Health dietary recommendations for energy, carbohydrates, and fats, vitamin A, niacin, vitamin B6, phosphorus and sodium, but intake of protein, riboflavin, folic acid, vitamin K, calcium and iron was significantly less than recommended.

Conclusions: The present study identified discrepancies between the actual and recommended dietary intake among unhoused young people. Deviations from recommendations were consistent with consuming an ultra processed diet..