

# FOOD SECURITY, NUTRITION AND HEALTH OF FOOD PANTRY PARTICIPANTS

Maurine Raedeke

Dr. Stephen Ball, Dissertation Supervisor

## ABSTRACT

This research examines the relationship between food security and nutrition and health of food pantry participants. In this cross-sectional study, food security and self-reported health information were collected in face-to-face interviews with 1,314 food pantry participants in 58 different pantry locations in central and northeast Missouri. A subset of 928 frequent pantry users was used in this research. Results suggest that food security was not predictive of gardening or hunting/fishing. For each point increase on the food security scale, there was a .564 decrease in total fruit and vegetable intake. Body mass index (BMI) was not predictive of food security. As food insecurity increased, the odds of having diabetes, hypertension or hypercholesterolemia increased. Food pantries offer a unique setting in which nutrition professionals can become involved in improving the health of a vulnerable, and often overlooked, population.