

Public Abstract

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Title: THREE ESSAYS ON FOOD INSECURITY, NUTRITIONAL OUTCOMES, AND SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AMONG SENIORS

As the senior population in the United States grows to be a more significant portion of the American populous, social scientists, public health advocates, policy makers, and health care professor must grapple with how to address the strain senior will place on health systems and social services. Nutrition is a critical component of maintaining good health, managing chronic diseases, and prevention, thus, we must learn more about the senior experiences with nutrition and social programs which address nutrition inadequacy. To contribute to this literature this dissertation uses nationally representative survey data and econometric analysis to understand seniors and nutrition. The first essay focuses on understanding what contributes to seniors' participation Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The second essay looks at the role food security and functional limitations play in seniors' nutritional outcomes. The third chapter explores what drives the higher food insecurity rates among senior women relative to senior men. All three essays highlight potential barriers for seniors having quality nutrition.