

ABSTRACT

Author: Latasha Neal
Title: An Examination Of Food Insecurity, Mental Health, And Drug And Alcohol Behaviors Among College Students
Thesis Advisor: Victoria Zigmont
Department: Department of Public Health and Honors College
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Studies in the United States have estimated that nearly half (43.5%) of postsecondary students experience food insecurity (Nazmi et al., 2018). Research conducted by Dr. Victoria Zigmont and Dr. Peggy Gallup of the Public Health Department estimate that about 30% of SCSU students are food insecure as well (Zigmont et al., 2018). Food insecurity is strongly correlated with poorer mental health and increases in substance use behaviors. This study investigates if there are any relationships between food insecurity, mental health and substance use behaviors among students attending SCSU by conducting a secondary analysis of the 2020 Student Health Survey conducted at the institution. A total of 589 undergraduate students participated in this study. Approximately 38.5% students were considered food insecure, 24.8% experiencing low food security, while 13.8% were considered to have very low food security. Results indicate a statistically significant relationship between having a diagnosis of depression and experience of depressive symptoms among those food insecure at SCSU. A significant correlation was also found between marijuana use in the past 30 days and a food insecure status. The results of this study will contribute to existing institution-focused information on food insecurity and can be useful for offices and organizations throughout the university.