

**Student Name:** Dalia Marmash

**Type of Presentation:** Poster

**Major Advisor:** Dr. Ock Chun

**Title:** The Associations between Diet Quality, Nutrient Adequacy, and Health Status in Mobile Food Pantry Users in Northeastern Connecticut

**Abstract:**

Mobile food pantries are an increasingly popular method of emergency food assistance, targeting the communities most affected by food insecurity; however, little is known about the dietary and health-related characteristics of mobile food pantry users. This study aims to characterize the diet quality and nutrient adequacy levels and examine their associations with sociodemographic characteristics and health status among mobile food pantry users in Northeastern Connecticut. Surveys to assess food insecurity, diet composition, and sociodemographic characteristics were administered to 83 adult food pantry users. BMI was calculated using measured height and weight, and diabetes and hypertension prevalence were self-reported. A subsample of the participants ( $n = 40$ ) completed a three-day dietary record for analysis of diet quality, and were found to have inadequate intakes of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and dairy, as well as some related micronutrients. At least 30% of participants had intakes below the Estimated Average Requirement (EAR) for vitamins A, C, E, calcium, zinc, magnesium, and folate. Prevalence of obesity, diabetes, and hypertension was higher than national averages in this sample. Questions assessing participant interest in changing their health were also posed, indicating overall high interest in learning about current diet quality and weight improvement. This characterization of mobile pantry users will serve as a reference for developing tailored nutrition education and determining the effectiveness of future interventions.