

Author: Mulalo Kenneth Muhali

Topic: Food and nutrition security

Title: Differences in food sold in supermarkets located in communities with different socio economic status, South Africa

Presentation Type: Oral

BACKGROUND: South Africa is one of the countries characterized by inequality. In recent years, urbanization and industrialization have led to an expansion of supermarkets in urban townships with increasing sales of cheap energy dense food items. This study assessed the availability of healthy food in urban and rural supermarkets in South Africa.

METHODS: This was a pilot study which collected data from four supermarkets situated in urban and rural communities. In addition, a convenient sample of 101 shoppers participated in this study. Face to face interviews were conducted using a structured questionnaire. Data was analyzed using BMI SPSS v22 statistics program.

RESULTS: A comparison of the four sites revealed slight differences in the availability of healthy food. There was a difference in the availability of fresh fish, which was only found in the urban supermarket located in the affluent area. Frozen and tinned fish were the only available forms of fish in the urban townships and rural area. Despite some differences, common fruits and vegetables were found in all the supermarkets.

CONCLUSION: This pilot study suggests that people residing in more affluent areas have a better access to a variety of fresh food products. Thus suggesting that poorer communities' access to fresh produce might be limited while they may benefit from having a diversity of food items through the presence of supermarkets.