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Topic: Food and nutrition security

Title: Food environments and food accessibility in Cape Town, South Africa: The current state of the literature

Presentation Type: Poster

Introduction

Local food environments play a key role in individual, family, and population-level health. This presentation reviews the current focus of academic and other relevant literature on food environments and food accessibility in Cape Town, South Africa.

Methods

The following databases were searched: PubMed/MEDLINE, Global Health, and Google Scholar. Key search terms comprised variations and combinations of the terms food, food environment food security, food insecurity, food access, food availability, Cape Town, South Africa, and Africa. To be included in the review, articles had to include a keyword in the title or abstract and be published in English.

Findings

Resulting documents (n=47) included peer-reviewed articles (n=18), unpublished student theses (n=13), institutional reports (n=12), and relevant news media articles (n=4). The current focus of the literature is primarily on geographic locations of supermarkets and their expansion into informal areas, and on urban garden initiatives and their viability in contributing to higher levels of food security in residential areas.

Conclusion

This is a relatively new and emerging area of research interest in Cape Town, as indicated by the limited number of authors and the relatively large portion of unpublished student research. A noticeable gap in the literature was a lack of information on the impact of the food environment on dietary behaviour and consumption patterns in the Cape Town area. Academic enquiry into these gaps may yield important findings that could have key policy implications.

