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Topic: Community health and nutrition programs

Title: The influence of the food environment on nutrition related chronic diseases in Langa Township, South Africa

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Abstract

Introduction

Obesogenic environments are defined as the total influence that surroundings, opportunities, or conditions of life have on promoting obesity and related health consequences in individuals or populations. Gaining knowledge about this environment especially in poor settings is essential to understand individual dietary choices and practices within the household and shed light on how these choices impact on the risk factors of diet-related non-communicable diseases.

Method

This study used a descriptive cross sectional design. A questionnaire survey was conducted among a systematic sample of eligible households in a rural and urban site in Langa Township, South Africa. Data were analysed using SPSS version 24.

Results

Overall 139 participants were enrolled in the study. Preliminary results show that most households ($n = 84$; 61%) earn less than R 2000 and spend a minimum R150 to maximum of R 2000 on monthly groceries ($M = R 786$). Participants shopped for food at various supermarkets, with Shoprite (89%) being the most used grocery store. Reasons for shopping included affordability (28.8%), proximity (24.5%) and a combination of both (20.1%). Most participants (73.4%) shopped for groceries once a month and purchased starch ($n=117$; 84.8%), sugar ($n= 104$; 74.8%) and spreads ($n= 99$; 71.2%).

Conclusion

In communities where households earn less than R2000 per month, spending on food varies. Furthermore, proximity and affordability are the drivers to purchase in major

supermarkets. Local supermarkets and household income thus play a role in food choices, indicating the need to explore how local supermarkets support healthy food choices.