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**Title:** Using Mixed-Methods to Create a Picture of Food Security among Western Australian Children

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Introduction

Evidence relating to food security determinants among regional and remote children in Western Australia (WA) is scarce. This study aimed to explore these determinants across food supply, access and utilisation dimensions.

Methods

A caregiver-child dyad (n=256) completed self-administered paper based pictorial surveys and key informants (i.e. health, school/youth, food supply workers) participated in semi-structured interviews (n=20). Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS (version 23). Qualitative data were analysed thematically using QSR Nvivo 10 (The

authors, manuscript under review). The Determinants of Food Security model underpinned this study.

## Results

Food Supply in some locations was inadequate; almost one in five caregivers reported there were insufficient outlets and over half reported food cost more in their community. Interviews confirmed these findings. Similarly, insufficient fruit and vegetable quality and food safety were issues reported in qualitative and quantitative studies. Food Access was challenging for some families who were required to travel up to 200 kilometres, requiring two hours' travel to purchase food. Social support networks varied across locations; approximately 15% of caregivers would not tell anyone if they were having trouble feeding their family, whereas interviews indicated strong networks existed. Children's food preferences and caregiver food literacy were key Food Utilisation determinants impacting food security.

## Conclusion

This research considered child, caregiver and community informant perspectives to contribute new information to the food security evidence base. Key determinants for practitioner consideration include improving healthy food preferences, caregiver knowledge and promoting social support structures. Policy makers should prioritise improving food supply and access determinants.