Rapid assessment of food insecurity in the urban households in Karaj

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*Abstract*

**Background:** Complex and multidimensional nature of measuring food insecurity has been an ongoing challenge for researchers.

**Objective:** The current study was conducted to assess household food insecurity in the city of Karaj, rapidly.

**Methods:** In this cross-sectional study, 677 households from different parts of Karaj were selected by the multi stage cluster sampling method. Information regarding dietary practices was also collected with semi quantified food frequency questionnaire. Food insecurity was assessed using Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS). Consistency of research tools were estimated by Cronbach’s alpha coefficient.

**Findings:** Totally, 76.6% households were food-insecure; with mild, moderate, and severe food insecurity (47.2%, 21.3% and 8.1%) respectively. 16.8% of households often worried about inadequate food consumption by household members, and 18.3% were often unable to consume preferred food because of lack of resources. The secure and mild insecure food groups had significantly higher oil and meat consumption compared to the moderate and severe insecure group (P=0.04, P=0.02 respectively). Cronbach's alpha coefficient indicated the high internal consistency of the used questionnaire (α=0.89).

**Conclusion:** Food insecurity in household level has a high prevalence in the urban area of Karaj. Targeted and comprehensive policy actions with a combination of short and long term policies seem to be necessary to offset this problem.

**Keywords:** Food insecurity, Prevalence, HFIAS

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