Background:
While research on Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) participation and proximal health indicators has been considerable, literature on best practices for assessing and addressing household food insecurity in public health clinics remains limited.

- Food insecurity is associated with increased gestational weight gain, gestational diabetes, and maternal depression
- Increased length of WIC participation linked to improved food security status
- In 2017 WIC served over 7.3 million individuals, two-thirds being infants and children

Purpose Statement:
The purpose of this study was to examine WIC professionals’ knowledge and perspectives of household food insecurity among WIC program participants.

Methodology:
During January 2018, we conducted four focus groups utilizing a semi-structured interview guide with public health staff across four public health districts in Midwestern counties. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and verified. NVivo 11.4.2 and SPSS 24 software were used for data organization and analysis.

Study Sample:
WIC staff (N=24) included social workers, nurses, nutritionists and ancillary staff. Participants had an average of nine years in public health practice.

Findings:
WIC providers spoke at length about adapting their approach to assess and address food insecurity in settings with unique characteristics due to cultural diversity. Four key themes emerged:
1) Language adaptation to assess food insecurity
2) Challenges posed by male presence while assessing food insecurity
3) Individualized client education to promote use of WIC food items
4) Diverse WIC staff can better assess food insecurity in diverse populations

Discussion/Implications:
Modifying language, content and interpersonal approach have been shown to be a key factor in successful and accurate food insecurity assessments as an adaptation to changing demographics to better serve at-risk maternal-child populations.

- Mirroring local population diversity in WIC staff
- Creating authentic connections to WIC families through a personalized approach
- Provide training on culturally appropriate approaches to client-centered care

Conclusion:
Findings from this study bring attention to important and previously undocumented adaptations to clinical practice that WIC staff utilize to best meet the needs of their local populations.

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