

MetroHealth Medical Center

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Abstract Submission Form

Poster Title: Food as Medicine Clinic Evaluation: Expansion and Sustained Results

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Introduction: Hospital-based food pantries have been frequently used to address food insecurity. However, few studies have longitudinally studied the impact of these food pantries on patients with chronic health conditions. In this study, we aimed to understand the effect of a hospital-based food pantry clinic on self-reported dietary changes, health outcomes, and resource utilization.

Methods: This study included food insecure participants with suboptimally controlled congestive heart failure, hypertension, or diabetes who visited a Food as Medicine (FAM) clinic at an academic healthcare system between September 2018 and May 2023. The clinic provided a three-day supply of food for participants and their families up to twice per month for up to 12 months. Baseline, three-month, and six-month surveys were used to assess dietary behaviors and electronic health record (EHR) data were used to assess health outcomes and utilization. Multivariate least squares regression was used to explore variables associated with FAM clinic use.

Results: At three months, participants self-reported improved dietary behaviors, including increased consumption of an increased variety of vegetables. There were also statistically significant decreases in hemoglobin A1c (-0.4), number of inpatient visits (-0.2), and total hospital costs (-\$27,898). These reductions were more significant within Female and African American participants.

Conclusion: Among patients with chronic diseases, the use of the FAM clinic was associated with improved self-reported dietary behaviors, health outcomes, and resource utilization.