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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

6TH MEETING
OF YOUNG RESEARCHERS OF UNIVERSITY OF PORTO



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Assessment of Food Insecurity in households of a social neighbourhood

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The assessment of food insecurity enables not only to characterize the food security of a population, but also to draw conclusions about the food security of a regional population or local groups. [1] This study evaluates the security of households living in a social neighborhood. A scale of perception of food insecurity was applied and the relationship with socio-cultural factors was evaluated.

The sample included 99 households and the scale used was adapted from the Brazilian Food Insecurity Scale. [2, 3] This scale includes 14 questions focused on the perception of food insecurity, ranging from concern about the possible lack of food, to a severe food restriction due to economic difficulties.

It was found that about 85% of households were living with food insecurity at different levels: mild, moderate, or severe, corresponding to 38.4%, 26.3% and 20.2%, respectively. Higher levels of food insecurity appear to be associated with lower education levels, lower family income, inexistence of children, changes in consumption of essential foods, decreased number of visits to doctor and purchase of medicines and if a woman represents the household.

In Portugal, more studies are needed in order to assess the prevalence of food insecurity, given the increasing difficulties that an increasing number of families are facing. It is important that local authorities develop regional studies to better assist the population in terms of nutritional education and social support, aiming to minimize the magnitude of the problem and its consequences.

References:

[1] Bickel, G., Nord, M., Price, C., Hamilton, H. and Cook, J. (2000), *Guide to Measuring Household Food Security*, USDA Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Analyses, Nutrition and Evaluation.

[2] Radimer, K., Olson, C., Greene, J., Campbell, C. and Habicht J-P. (1992), *Understanding hunger and developing indicators to assess it in women and children*, Journal of Nutrition Education. 1992; 24(1):36-45.

[3] IBGE (2010), *National Survey by Household Sampling - Food Security 2004/2009*, Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Alleviation; Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management.