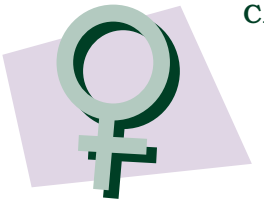
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES • OFFICE OF WOMEN'S HEALTH



CWHS

Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

Women who do not have assured access to enough food to meet basic needs are defined as being food insecure. These women may have to use various coping behaviors in order to have enough food for themselves and their families.[1] They may choose from a number of coping behaviors when food is scarce or unavailable, including not paying rent, delaying purchase of medicine, or foregoing other necessities when there is not enough food to meet basic needs.

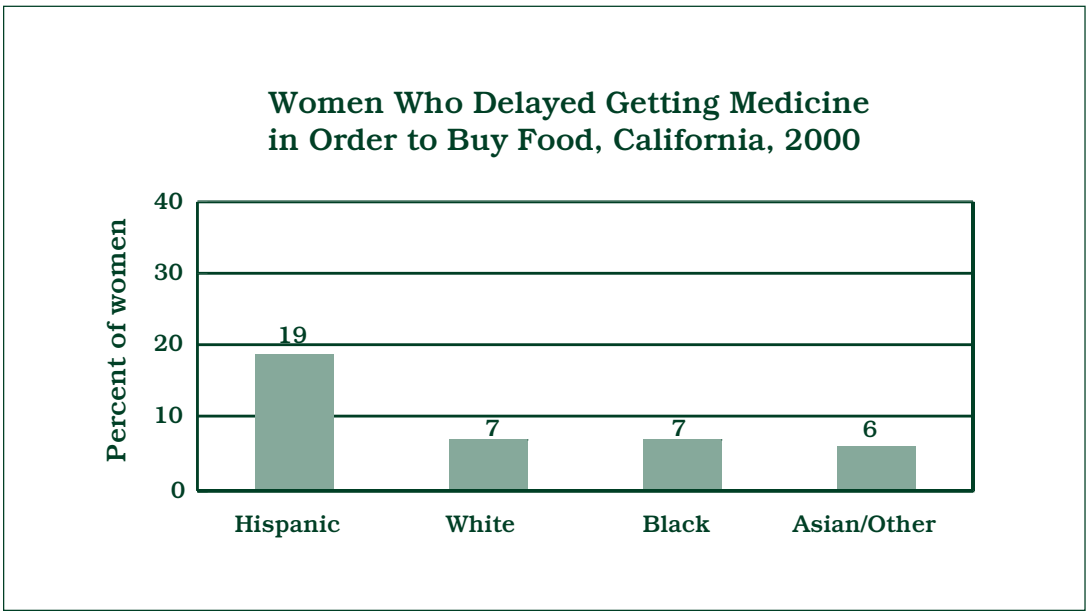
The 2000 California Women's Health Survey (CWHS) provided an opportunity to examine women's coping behaviors when food was scarce. The CWHS asked women, ***"During the last 12 months, have you or others in your household delayed getting medical treatment or filling prescriptions in order to buy food?"*** Questions on personal characteristics such as age, race/ethnicity, and number of children in the household under age six were also included.

- 10% of all women surveyed responded that they delayed getting treatment or purchasing medicine in order to buy food.
- Hispanic women were more likely than other race/ethnicities to delay medical needs in order to buy food.
- Younger women were more likely than older women to delay medical care in order to buy food:

  12% of women ages 18-24;
  11% of women 25-34;
  12%f women 35-44;
  11% of women 45-54;
  7% of women 55-64;
  3% of women 65 and older.

- Women with children under age 6 were more likely than women without children under age 6 to delay medical treatment or buying medicine in order to buy food, (12% vs. 9%).

[1] Bickel G, Andrews M, and Klein B. "Measuring Food Security in the U.S.: A Supplement to the CPS. USDA Food and Consumer Services, Office of Analysis and Evaluation, Alexandria, VA January 1996.



WOMEN WHO DELAYED MEDICAL TREATMENT OR BUYING MEDICINE IN ORDER TO BUY FOOD, BY AGE, RACE/ETHNICITY AND FAMILY STATUS, CALIFORNIA, 2000

Cancer Prevention and Nutrition Section, Cancer Control Branch, California Department of Health Services; Research and Evaluation Branch, California Department of Social Services

Public Health Message:

Many California women are faced with difficult choices between food and medication when allocating household resources. This is especially true for Hispanic women, women ages 18-54 and those with young children in the household. More outreach about supplemental food and medical assistance is needed.

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