

The intricate relationship between socioeconomic status, environmental factors, and their role in shaping health behaviours and food insecurity in peri-urban settings in Flanders

Dissertation submitted to obtain the degree of Doctor of Health Sciences (UGent) and Doctor of Adult Educational Sciences (VUB)

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BACKGROUND

The rates of **overweight and obesity** have been increasing in the last decades. There is a link between health behaviours such as **eating behaviour** and **active transport** and issues such as **food insecurity** with overweight and obesity. People's **environments** have been identified as settings that can **influence** these **behaviours**. But there is evidence that healthy environments are **not equally distributed**, whereby people with a **lower socioeconomic status** (LSES) may be more affected by **unhealthy** environments.



Study 2. AIM: to assess which variables (individual, social, environmental) are associated with food insecurity



Living in rental housing, having poor subjective health and having LSES was associated with food insecurity



Medium to low neighborhood social cohesion and perceived food accessibility were associated with food insecurity

GAPS

1. Most studies have been conducted in urban settings

Study 1. AIM: to analyze if people's food environments are associated with eating behaviour and if SES affects these links

2. Few studies have been conducted in non-English speaking countries

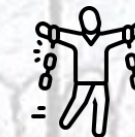


Participants with a LSES were more critical of their food environments but lived closer to healthy and unhealthy stores

3. Differences according to socioeconomic status (SES) are usually not examined.



Perceptions seemed more strongly associated with eating behaviour and should be included more in future research



Study 3. AIM: to analyze the decision-making around active transport and its environmental influences

For people with LSES, active transport was not always a voluntarily choice



Cycling and walking lanes not always available and in good condition

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