

# Food insecurity in seniors linked to increased risk for dementia

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For older adults, food insecurity is associated with an increased risk for dementia with poorer memory function and faster memory decline, according to a study published online Nov. 21 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Haobing Qian, Ph.D., from the University of California in San Francisco, and colleagues examined whether food insecurity in [older](#)

[adults](#) is associated with later-life [cognitive outcomes](#) in a cohort study of U.S. residents aged 50 years and older with food insecurity data in 2013 and cognitive outcome data between 2014 and 2018. Outcomes were dementia probability and memory scores estimated biennially between 2014 and 2018.

The sample included 7,012 participants with a mean age of 67.7 years. The researchers found that experiencing low food security and very low food security was associated with higher odds of dementia compared with that seen in food-secure older adults (odds ratios, 1.38 and 1.37, respectively). Lower memory levels and faster age-related memory decline were seen in association with low and very low food security.

"Our study contributes to a limited literature by capitalizing on a large and diverse sample, validated exposure and outcome measures, and longitudinal data to robustly evaluate these associations, providing evidence in support of the connection between [food insecurity](#) in older adulthood and subsequent brain health," the authors write. "Our findings highlight the need to improve food security in older adults and that doing so may protect individuals from [cognitive decline](#) and dementia."

One author disclosed ties to Cogstate.

**More information:** Haobing Qian et al, Food Insecurity, Memory, and Dementia Among US Adults Aged 50 Years and Older, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.44186](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.44186)

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