

USPSTF: Not enough evidence to recommend screening for food insecurity

June 26 2024, by Elana Gotkine



The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) concludes that the current evidence is insufficient for recommending screening for food insecurity in the primary care setting. These findings form the basis of a

draft recommendation statement published online June 25.

Researchers from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in Rockville, Maryland, examined the evidence on the benefits and harms of screening for and interventions to ameliorate [food insecurity](#). A total of 39 studies, with 198,762 participants, were included in the review.

The researchers found that in one [randomized clinical trial](#) with 789 participants that examined the impact of screening for food insecurity, there was no difference observed between the groups in the percent reporting food insecurity after six months (29.6 and 29.8% in the intervention and usual-care groups, respectively). In 10 accuracy studies, two-item screeners typically had sensitivity above 95% and specificity above 82%. The lowest accuracy was seen for the one-item screener, with sensitivity and specificity of 0.59 and 0.87, respectively.

Based on these findings, the USPSTF concludes that for children, adolescents, and adults, the current evidence is insufficient for assessing the balance of [benefits](#) and harms of screening for food insecurity on [health outcomes](#) in the setting of primary care (I statement).

The [draft evidence review](#) and [draft recommendation statement](#) have been posted for public comment. Comments can be submitted from June 25 to July 22, 2024.

More information: [Draft Evidence Review](#)
[Draft Recommendation Statement](#)
[Comment on Recommendation Statement](#)

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