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## Introduction

- Goal: The aim of the current study was to document prevalence of food insecurity in osteopathic medical students (OMS) at ATSU-SOMA.
- Food insecurity negatively impacts mental health, physical health, and academic performance.<sup>1</sup>
- Food insecurity prevalence has not been well documented in osteopathic students, but among allopathic students ranges from 12% to 51%.<sup>2-7</sup>

## Methods

- **Survey:** US Department of Agriculture's US Household Food Security Survey Module: Six-Item Short Form<sup>8</sup> was administered twice (fall and spring) during AY 2024-2025
    - The food that I/we bought just didn't last, and I/we didn't have money to get more.
    - I/we couldn't afford to eat balanced meals.
    - In the last 12 months\*, did you/you or other adults in your household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?
      - If so, how often?
    - In the last 12 months\*, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food?
    - In the last 12 months\*, were you ever hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?
- Scoring: High food security: 0-1; Low food security: 2-4; Very low food security: 5-6
- \*The timeframe assessed varied based on year in school.
- **Population:** OMS I-III osteopathic medical students at ATSU-SOMA.
  - **IRB:** exempt (non-jurisdiction status) by the A.T. Still University-Arizona Institutional Review Board.
  - **Recruitment:** Whenever possible, in-person survey participation was accompanied by a small snack.

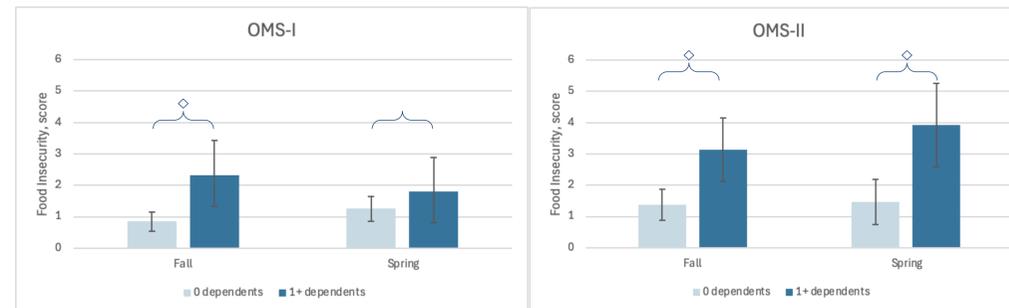
## Results

- The prevalence of food insecurity among ATSU-SOMA students is 30-40% compared to 13.7% in the general US population in 2024.<sup>9</sup>
- The response rate was markedly higher when students were surveyed in person versus email (e.g., 20 vs 111 respondents).

**Table 1.** Rates of food security in survey respondents in fall '24 and spring '25 for first-, second-, and third-year osteopathic medical students (OMS).

Class Year	Respondents, n (class size)	High/Marginal Food Security, n (%)	Low Food Security, n (%)	Very Low Food Security, n (%)
<b>Fall</b>				
OMS-I	123 (145)	94 (76.1%)	17 (13.8%)	12 (9.8%)
OMS-II	73 (85)	40 (54.8%)	22 (30.1%)	11 (15.1%)
OMS-III	20 (160)	3 (15%)	12 (60%)	5 (25%)
<b>Spring</b>				
OMS-I	117 (145)	82 (70.1%)	18 (15.4%)	17 (14.5%)
OMS-II	44 (85)	25 (56.8%)	7 (15.9%)	12 (27.3%)
OMS-III	111 (160)	67 (60.4%)	29 (26.1%)	15 (13.5%)

**Figure 1:** Average food insecurity score for OMS-I and OMS-II with and without dependents in the fall versus spring survey. Diamond indicates statistically significant differences. Additional factors analyzed included gender identity and age groups; there were no statistically significant differences.



## Conclusions

- Survey results indicated a high prevalence (30-40%) of low or very low food security among OMS I-III students. This finding is consistent with previous studies of other medical student populations.
- Solutions-based discussions have been initiated at ATSU-SOMA.
- Further research is necessary to determine the scope of this problem across osteopathic medical schools.

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