Food Security for the Community-living Elderly People in Beijing, China

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Food security has been identified as an important issue for elderly people’s quality of life and aging in place. This study developed a food security index which is composed of three components—food intake, food quality and food affordability to measure the food security status of community-living elderly in the central urban districts of Beijing metropolitan area, China. Binary logistic regression is applied to analyze the association between food security and demographic factors, income, health status, and food programs of elderly people. The results show that 50.5 percent of the surveyed elderly are food secure. Participants with higher income and better health are more likely to report being food secure, but those who are aware of food programs are more likely to report being food insecure and having poor food intake. Those with higher income and self-care ability are more likely to report healthy food intake. Those who are married and living with others are more likely to report high food quality. The young-old (aged 60 to 69), however, are more likely than the oldest-old (aged 80 and over) to report low food quality, but they are less likely than the oldest-old to report low food affordability. Those with better health are more likely to report low food affordability. To avoid food insecurity among the elderly population, the Beijing municipal government provides food and coupon programs. The results of this study indicate improvements in these programs are needed.