



## DIETARY INTAKE AND DIET QUALITY IN ADULTS WITH LOWER SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS: THE NUTRIQUÉBEC STUDY

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The rising prevalence of food insecurity across Canada is in part attributed to the sharp rise in food prices over the last few years, affecting people with a lower socioeconomic status (SES) to a greater extent. The present study aimed to assess the current dietary intake and diet quality of adults with a lower SES compared to adults enrolled in the NutriQuébec project.

Individuals of lower SES (n=74) were recruited directly within various community organizations and data were collected in person using online questionnaires. For the Web-based NutriQuébec project conducted in the general population (n=2894), questionnaires were completed online. Dietary intakes were measured using a validated Web-based 24-h recall tool (R24W) completed one to three times by all participants. Diet quality was assessed using the Healthy Eating Food Index (HEFI-2019, scored on 80 points), which measures adherence to the 2019 Canada Food Guide. HEFI-2019 scores were estimated among each group using the National Cancer Institute's population ratio method.

Compared to the NutriQuébec population, the lower SES group included fewer women (62.2% vs 86.1%), more individuals without a degree or with a high school or trade diploma as highest degree (55.6% vs 13.2%), more individuals with a household income < 30,000\$CAD (66.2% vs 6.7%) and fewer full-time workers (27.0% vs 44.7%). The mean HEFI-2019 score in the lower SES group (43.3 points, 95% CI: 39.4;47.3) was lower than in the NutriQuébec population (51.3 points, 95% CI: 50.9;51.8), mostly due to lower scores for the Vegetables and fruits (-2.8 points; 95% CI: -4.2;-1.4), Free sugars (-1.2 points; 95% CI: -2.0;-0.4) and Beverages components (-3.4 points; 95% CI: -6.0;0.9). The total mean daily energy intakes were essentially identical between both groups (lower SES 2142 kcal, 95% CI: 1827;2457 vs NutriQuébec 2120 kcal, 95% CI: 2100;2140).

These results provide unique robust evidence that a lower SES in the province of Québec is associated with a lower diet quality, independent of energy intake.