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“Global food security and food safety:
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The Impact of Anemia Knowledge on Household Food Security in Guatemala

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Abstract

Food security is one of the most important tasks of agriculture. The majority of agricultural policies, projects, and programs are directed towards achieving food security, and knowledge is one of the central factors in this process. Previous studies find positive relation between food security and different fields of knowledge, one of which is the health knowledge. This knowledge is especially important because food insecurity is significantly linked to different physical and behavioural health problems. In our research area in Guatemala, Anemia is one of the most serious health problems caused by food insecurity.

This study investigates the impact of Anemia knowledge on food security in Guatemala, focusing on three aspects of Anemia knowledge: knowledge on causes, knowledge on symptoms, and knowledge on prevention. By employing the Ordered Logit Regression Model, we assess the impact of these three aspects on the following food security categories: food security of all household members, food security of adults 18 years old or above and food security of children below 18 years old. The study is based on the data collected from 2,293 Guatemalan households in 2015 by using standardised survey questionnaire. The sample area includes three departments in the southeastern part of Guatemala: Jutiapa, Jalapa, and Chiquimula.

Results show that most of the Anemia knowledge aspects play a significant role in improving food security. Taking into consideration the importance of Anemia knowledge on food security, and the group of people who are most vulnerable to Anemia, it is recommended that capacity building activities on Anemia knowledge be conducted, such as special trainings about Anemia for the women of reproduction age and inclusion of Anemia knowledge element into the school curriculum for teaching the basics of Anemia to young children.

Keywords: Anemia knowledge, disease, food security, Guatemala, household survey