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The Impact of a Home-Delivered Meal Program on Nutritional Risk, Dietary Intake, Food Security, Loneliness, and Social Well-Being

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Maintaining independence and continuing to live at home is one solution to manage the rising health care costs of aging populations in the United States; furthermore, seniors are at risk of malnutrition and food insecurity. Home-delivered meal programs are a tool to address food, nutrition, and well-being concerns of this population. Few studies have identified outcomes from these programs; this pilot study reviews the nutritional status, dietary intake, well-being, loneliness, and food security levels of seniors participating in a Meals on Wheels delivery service. Clients, new to the meal program, participated in pre- and postphone interviews, and 51 seniors completed the study. The survey was composed of five scales or questionnaires, and statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS. Improvements across all five measures were statistically significant after participating two months in the home-delivered meal program. Implications for further research, practice, and the Older Americans Act are discussed.

KEYWORDS *dietary intake, elderly, food insecurity, home-delivered meals, mental health, nutritional status, Older Americans Act Nutrition program*

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