Older Adults Increasingly Having Trouble Securing Food

Spotlight on Senior Hunger, a new report examining the growth of senior hunger in the United States, has found that the number of food-insecure adults older than 60 has more than doubled to 4.8 million from 2001 to 2011. The report also reveals that the rate of senior hunger has increased over the past decade due largely to the Great Recession. The findings show that this growth was most pronounced in Baby Boomers.

Released jointly by the National Foundation to End Senior Hunger and Feeding America, the report confirms the number of food-insecure older adults, who may not know where they will find their next meal, in 2011 was 50% higher than before the recession in 2007. The aging Baby Boomer generation experienced the highest percentage of food insecurity among older adults, with 64.75% of all food-insecure older adults qualifying as Baby Boomers (ages 60 to 69), in contrast to 11.85% of food-insecure adults 80 and older. The study also noted a statistically significant increase among those individuals who are unemployed (9.35% point change), who are disabled (4.16% point change), and among Hispanics (3.96% point change).

For the report, researchers documented the state of hunger among Americans 60 and older in 2011 using data from the Core Food Security Module in Current Population Study. Each question is designed to capture some aspect of food insecurity in the past 30 days as well as over the past 12 months.


Statin Use May Have Musculoskeletal Risks

Although statins effectively lower cardiovascular illnesses and death, the full spectrum of statin musculoskeletal adverse events (AEs) is unknown. Statin-associated musculoskeletal AEs include a wide variety of clinical conditions, including muscle weakness, muscle cramps, and tendinous diseases.

The research team used data from a military health care system to determine whether statins were associated with musculoskeletal conditions based on statin use during the 2005 fiscal year. Patients were divided into two groups: statin users for at least 90 days and non-users. A total of 46,249 patients met the study criteria and of those, researchers propensity score-matched (a statistical approach that mathematically matches the characteristics of patients in two or more groups) 6,967 statin users with 6,967 nonusers.

Statin users had a higher odds ratio (OR) for musculoskeletal disease diagnosis group 1 (all musculoskeletal diseases: OR, 1.19), for musculoskeletal disease diagnosis group 1b (dislocation/strain/sprain: OR, 1.13), and for musculoskeletal disease diagnosis group 2 (musculoskeletal pain: OR, 1.09), but not for musculoskeletal disease diagnosis group 1a (osteoarthritis/arthropathy: OR, 1.07), according to study results for the propensity score-matched pairs.

Alzheimer’s Plan Update Released

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has released the National Plan to Address Alzheimer’s Disease: 2013 Update. The first-ever National Alzheimer’s Plan, initially released in May 2012, was mandated by the bipartisan National Alzheimer’s Project Act (P.L. 111-375), which Congress passed unanimously in 2010. The 2013 Update includes a new timeline for achieving its first goal—prevent and effectively treat Alzheimer’s disease (AD) by 2025—and a review of progress over the past year.

In addition to the creation of a timeline, the 2013 Update includes new provisions such as:

- Creation of important milestones to facilitate achieving the goal of preventing and effectively treating AD by 2025.
- Development of a curriculum on AD for primary care practitioners so that providers have the necessary skills to provide high-quality dementia care.
- Convening an expert panel on advanced dementia to examine the unique and often unaddressed needs of those in the late stages of the disease.
- Expanding public outreach efforts to increase awareness of the disease and connect those with AD and their caregivers to available resources.

For the full 2013 Update, visit http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/napa/#Plan.