

Food Access and Insecurity in Adults with Mobility Disabilities

Presentation to the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto

November 5, 2020

Naomi Schwartz, PhD MPH
University of Toronto Mississauga
Department of Geography and Planning
naomir.schwartz@mail.utoronto.ca
Supervisors: Dr. Ron Buliung, Dr. Kathi Wilson



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO
MISSISSAUGA

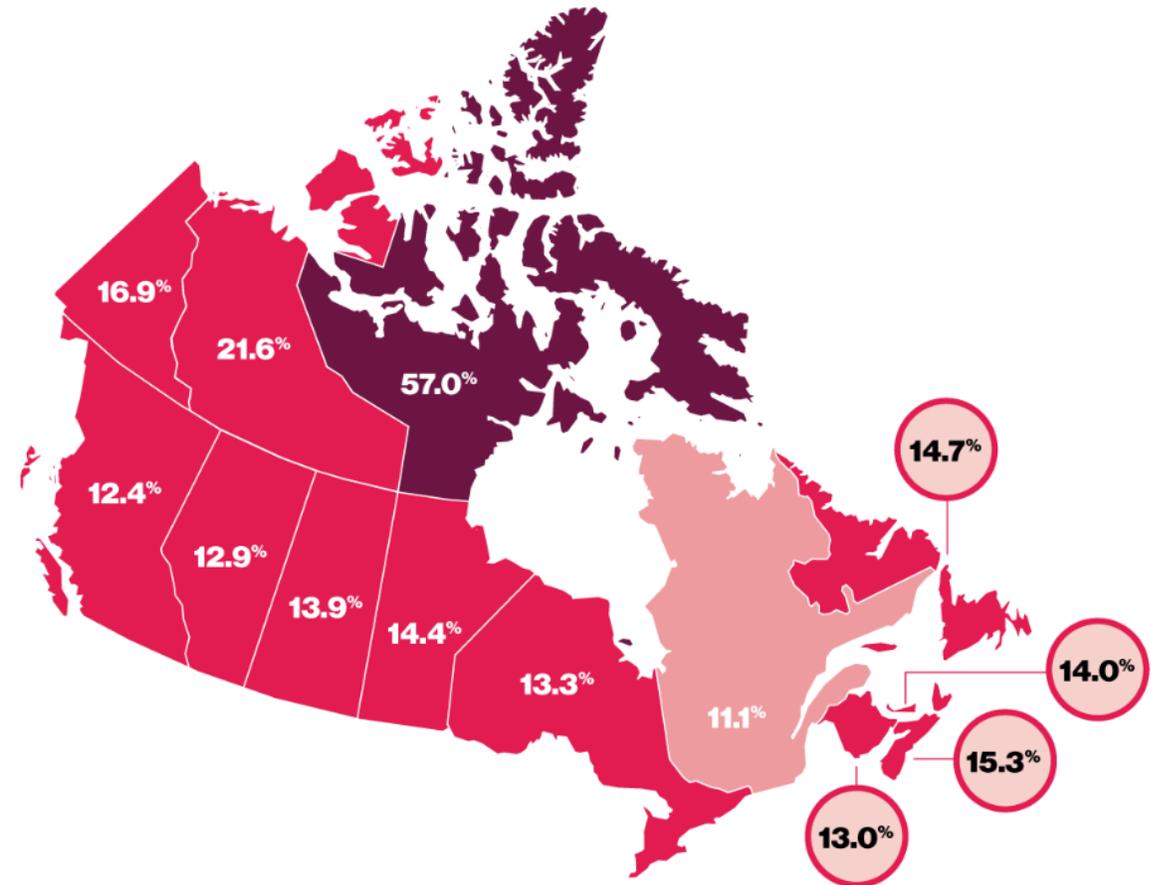
Outline

- Introduction
- Outline of research study
- Theoretical approaches
- Research findings
 - Paper 1: Geographic associations
 - Paper 2: Experiences of food systems
 - Paper 3: Food access within the home
- Recommendations
- Questions

Food insecurity

- Inadequate or insecure access to food for financial reasons
 - Worry
 - Food choices
 - Skipping meals
- Related to poor health
 - Chronic conditions, mental illness, nutritional inadequacies, higher mortality

Rates of food insecurity by province



Food insecurity and disability

- High rate of food insecurity in people with disabilities
 - About 1.5-2.5 x higher odds of food insecurity
 - Relationship is mainly explored in the United States
- Explanations for this association
 - low income
 - high unemployment
 - Higher expenses (medical, equipment, care)
 - Low mobility considered as a barrier to access

A black wire shopping cart with red handles is positioned in the foreground of a desert landscape. The background features rolling yellow and orange hills under a bright, hazy sky. The overall scene suggests a lack of access to grocery stores in a remote or arid area.

Place effects on food access

Food Deserts

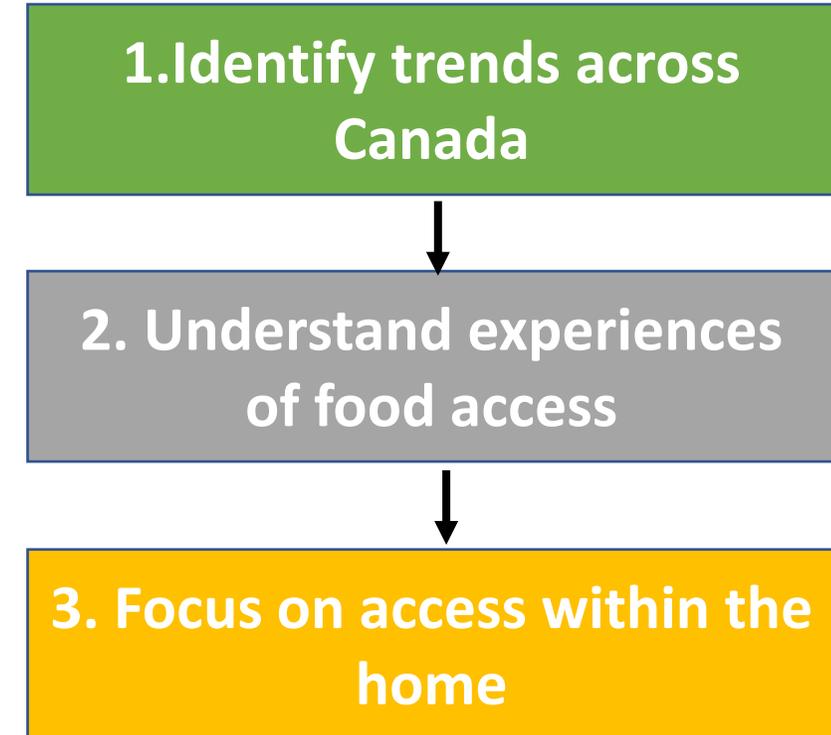
- Areas without access to a grocery store with cheap and healthy food
- Do all people in the area travel the same way?
- Ableist in its design/understanding of movement

Research question

How does place influence food access for adults with mobility disabilities?

Research study

- Analysis of Canadian national survey data on mobility disability and food insecurity by province
- Interviewed 23 people in Toronto-considering experiences of food access on the trip to food stores, at home using mobile go-along interviews



Theoretical approaches: Models of disability

1. Social model of disability
2. Critical ableist perspective
3. Assemblage perspective

Social model of disability

Disability vs. Impairments

- Impairment as bodily differences-for example difficulty walking
- Disability is the discrimination imposed on people with impairments
 - Environments that exclude people
 - Social discrimination against inclusion
- Focus on eliminating barriers to participation

Used in Paper 1-when interpreting Canadian population inequality.



<https://humanrightseducationaustralia.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Social-Model-of-Disability.png>

Critical ableist perspective

Disability is created in contrast with ideals of ability

- Challenges definition of an impairment (difference from the norm)
- Focus on normative systems that create ideals/exclude some
- Why was something designed to the exclusion of some?/Why does it continue to exist unchallenged?

Used in Paper 2 to question the system of food access:

The food system is designed with a very specific consumer in mind –like the white, suburban dweller, with access to a car

Assemblage perspective

Capacity is shaped by the connections that we make and the world around us

- the body interacts with available technology, connections with others, & physical settings
- Capacities are sometimes limited/set-but also often challenged

Used in Paper 3 to consider capacity within the home:

This applied very well when considering the home- an important & underexamined place of food access

Findings

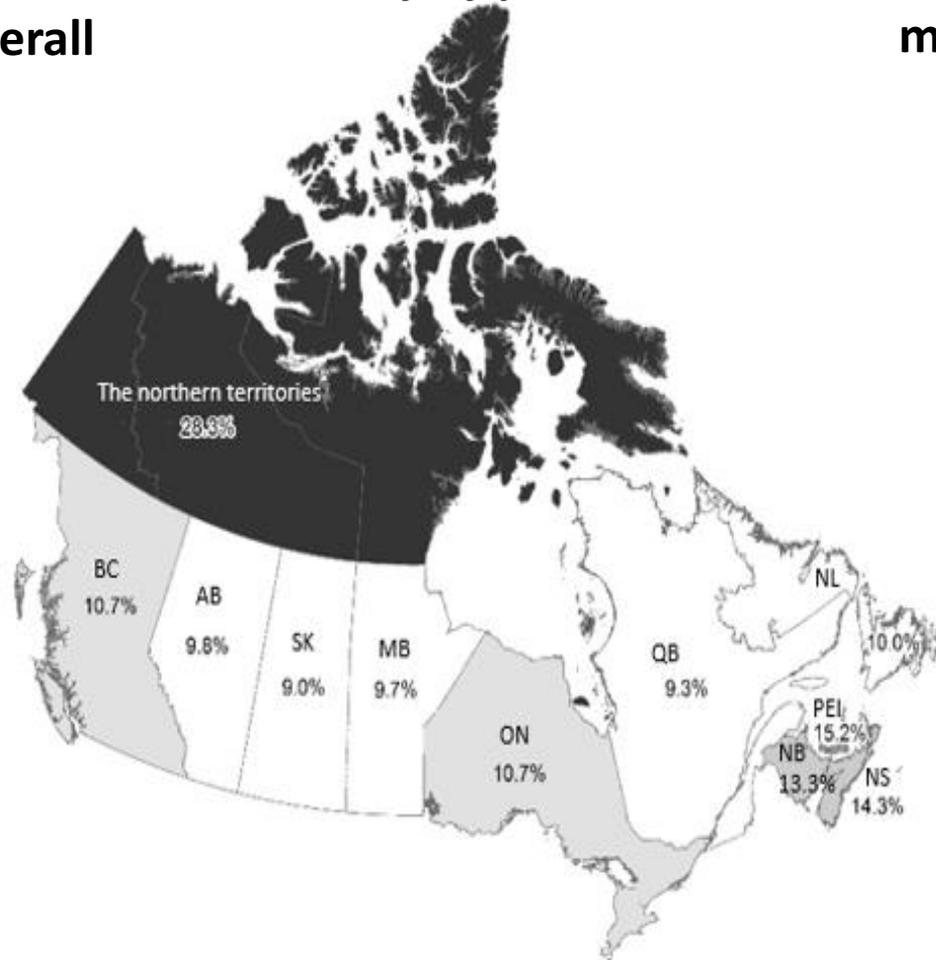
Paper 1

Mobility Impairment & Food insecurity in Canada

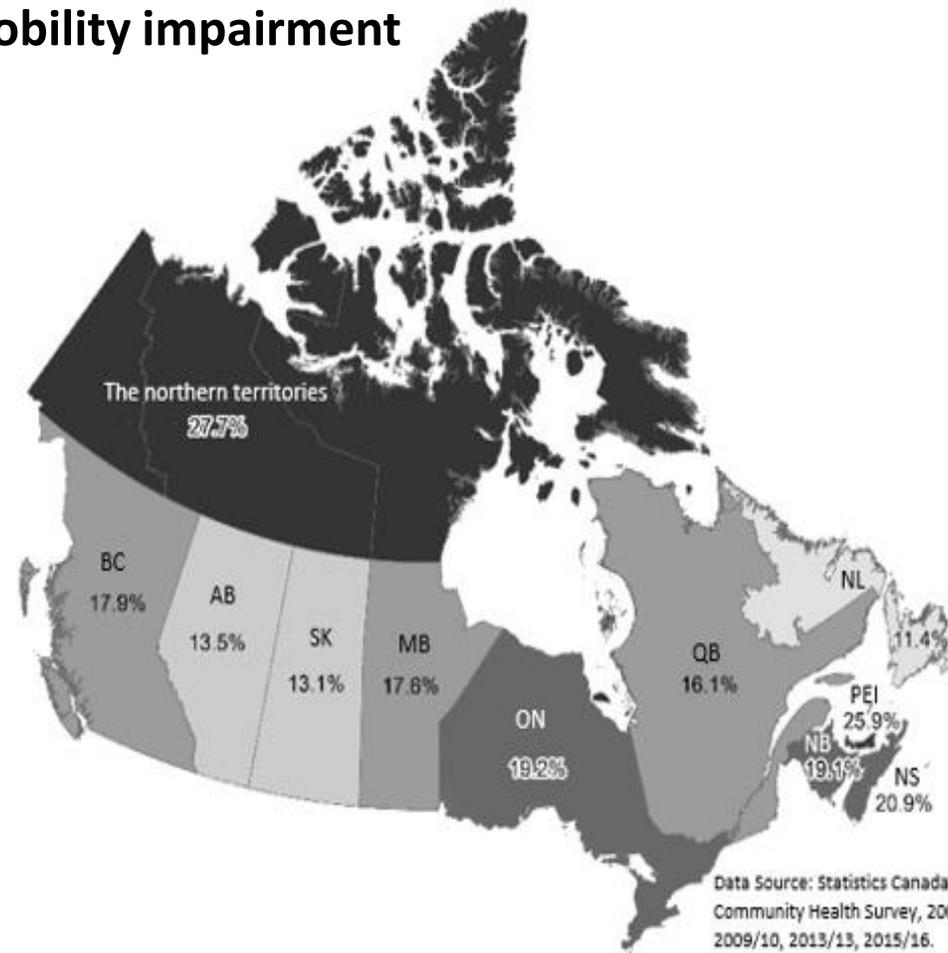
- People with disabilities experienced 3.85 the odds of food insecurity compared to people without controlling for age and sex
- Controlling for additional factors like income, household ownership lessened the effect but did not eliminate it (Odds of 2.11)
- Food insecurity strongly decreases with age (old age security)

Paper 1

Rates food insecurity by province overall



Rates of food insecurity by province among people with mobility impairment



Data Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Community Health Survey, 2007/08, 2009/10, 2013/13, 2015/16.

Paper 1

Among people with mobility impairments

- Lowest odds in Newfoundland, Quebec, Alberta, Saskatchewan compared to Ontario
- Poverty reduction strategies-in Newfoundland & Quebec
- Alberta with AISH system-higher disability benefits

Jurisdiction	Single person considered employable	Single person with a disability*	Single parent, one child	Couple, two children
Alberta	\$8,027	\$10,225 (or \$19,705)	\$19,743	\$28,989
British Columbia	\$8,124	\$13,096	\$19,795	\$25,976
Manitoba	\$9,494	\$12,132	\$21,364	\$29,483
New Brunswick	\$7,122	\$9,837	\$19,920	\$26,412
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$11,379	\$11,579	\$23,364	\$29,178
Nova Scotia	\$7,433	\$10,264	\$18,182	\$27,663
Ontario	\$9,461	\$14,682	\$21,136	\$30,545
Prince Edward Island	\$7,900	\$10,229	\$20,619	\$32,135
Quebec	\$9,083	\$12,741	\$21,536	\$29,657
Saskatchewan	\$8,820	\$11,276 (or \$15,645)	\$21,086	\$29,776

(Maytree, 2018)

Paper 1

- Lowest odds in Newfoundland, Quebec, Alberta, Saskatchewan compared to Ontario
- Poverty reduction strategies-in Newfoundland & Quebec
- Alberta with AISH system-higher disability benefits

Jurisdiction	Single person considered employable	Single person with a disability*	Single parent, one child	Couple, two children
Alberta	\$8,027	\$10,225 (or \$19,705)	\$19,743	\$28,989
British Columbia	\$8,124	\$13,096	\$19,795	\$25,976
Manitoba	\$9,494	\$12,132	\$21,364	\$29,483
New Brunswick	\$7,122	\$9,837	\$19,920	\$26,412
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$11,379	\$11,579	\$23,364	\$29,178
Nova Scotia	\$7,433	\$10,264	\$18,182	\$27,663
Ontario	\$9,461	\$14,682	\$21,136	\$30,545
Prince Edward Island	\$7,900	\$10,229	\$20,619	\$32,135
Quebec	\$9,083	\$12,741	\$21,536	\$29,657
Saskatchewan	\$8,820	\$11,276 (or \$15,645)	\$21,086	\$29,776

(Maytree, 2018)

Paper 1

- Lowest odds in Newfoundland, Quebec, Alberta, Saskatchewan compared to Ontario
- Poverty reduction strategies-in Newfoundland & Quebec
- Alberta/Saskatchewan-higher disability benefits

Jurisdiction	Single person considered employable	Single person with a disability*	Single parent, one child	Couple, two children
Alberta	\$8,027	\$10,225 (or \$19,705)	\$19,743	\$28,989
British Columbia	\$8,124	\$13,096	\$19,795	\$25,976
Manitoba	\$9,494	\$12,132	\$21,364	\$29,483
New Brunswick	\$7,122	\$9,837	\$19,920	\$26,412
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$11,379	\$11,579	\$23,364	\$29,178
Nova Scotia	\$7,433	\$10,264	\$18,182	\$27,663
Ontario	\$9,461	\$14,682	\$21,136	\$30,545
Prince Edward Island	\$7,900	\$10,229	\$20,619	\$32,135
Quebec	\$9,083	\$12,741	\$21,536	\$29,657
Saskatchewan	\$8,820	\$11,276 (or \$15,645)	\$21,086	\$29,776

(Maytree, 2018)

Paper 2: Experiences of food access

- Financial as overlying barrier to food access
- Barriers found in the home, transportation, places of food access, related to social assistance
- Stress, frustration, fear as regular parts of food access

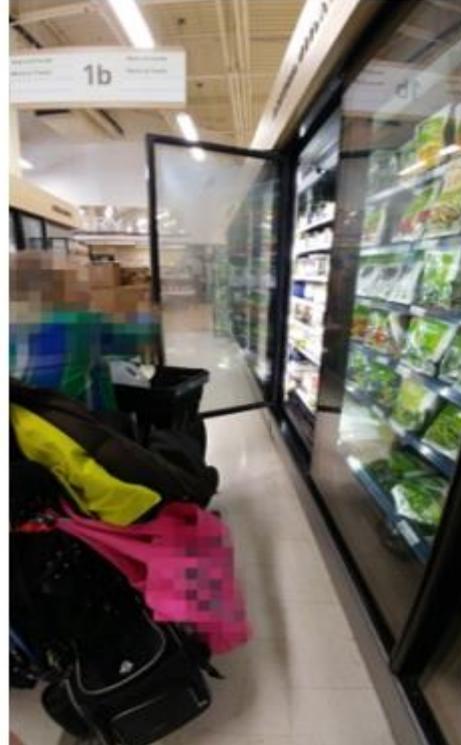
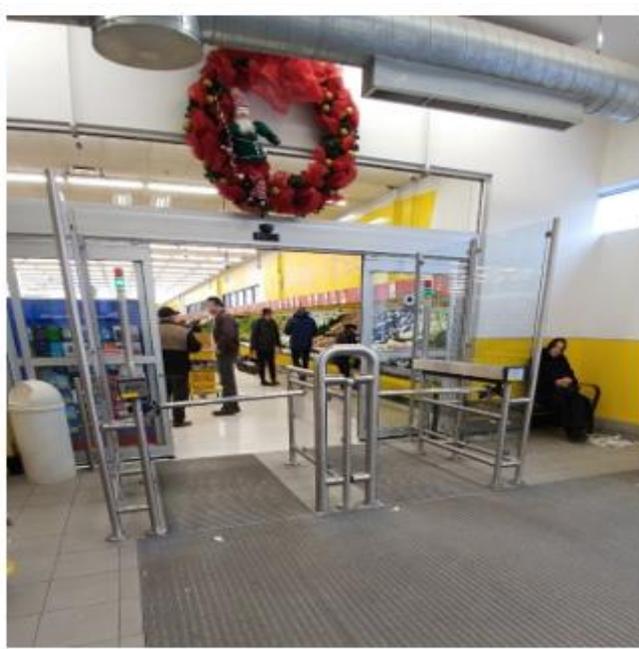
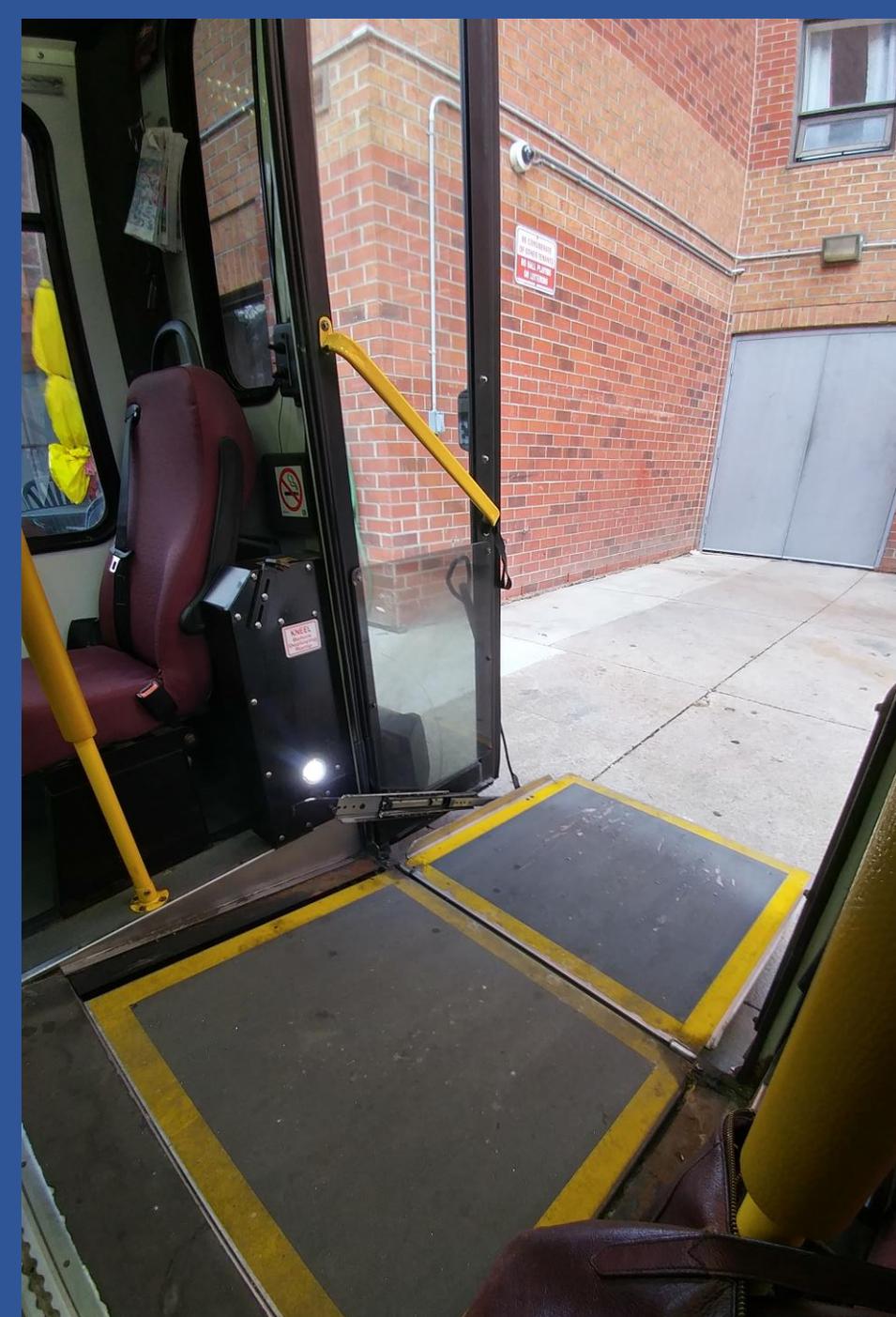


Figure 4.2: Barriers in grocery stores



Travel to food destinations

- Travel with many barriers on route- especially in the winter
- Lack of curb cuts, cracks in sidewalks, ice, snow, unexpected barriers
- Wheel-Trans as necessary for many, but inflexible for food shopping



Paper 2

- Barriers in times of disruption
 - Construction
 - Mechanical breakdowns
 - Weather

Paper 3: The home acts to enable/disable food access

As a...

- Financial resource
- Physical setting of food-related activity
- Setting of social interaction

Paper 3

The home as a financial resource

- Finances influence access to housing
- Housing makes up a significant share of costs/expenses

Factors impacting access to housing

- ODSP and limited benefits
- Toronto's subsidized housing system
- Toronto rental market



The ramp from hell

Paper 3

Housing environments and food related tasks

Ability based in having an...

- “Accessible” apartment/home
- Appropriate location relative to other resources

Factors that impact housing environments

- Subsidized housing system
- Ontario’s Assistive Devices Program
- Rental unit policy
- Limited income supports

Housing and situations of care

Related to...

- Informal care from family/friends
- Living with others v. alone
- Formal care through LHINs (CCAC)

Factors that impact care

- ODSP policy-resource sharing
- Formal care policy (ex. ‘hot food limits’)
- Social expectations of independence/interdependence

Overall Summary

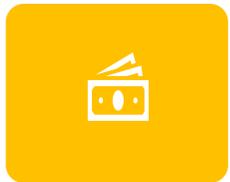


1. Identified a clear association between disability and food insecurity that differed by geography



2. From food deserts to structural barriers/ableism in access.

- Disability identity and experiences based in ableist ideals and spaces (e.g., the home, in public transit, public spaces, and food sources)



3. Poverty importantly intersected with poor physical access to food



4. The home is a major site in which food insecurity is created



Recommendations

Recommendations

- Income as primary concern –higher disability income, basic income program
- AODA enforcement
- Accessibility in design, not as an afterthought
- Importance of proper housing
- Care as integral component to food access-interdependence as the ideal

Food insecurity and Covid19

- Highlights inadequacy of ODSP
- Care work/care workers as especially precarious
- Need for income to access food in times of emergencies
 - Food delivery
- Show need for change
 - Basic income with CERB as an example
 - Highlights how people of different abilities access food

People with disabilities left out of the conversation about coping with COVID, advocates say



'Like having a ticket to poverty,' advocate for people with disabilities says

CBC Radio · Posted: Jun 05, 2020 7:43 PM ET | Last Updated: June 5



The pandemic has changed France Rochon's way of life. Born with a rare type of dwarfism, and diagnosed five years ago with pulmonary hypertension, she says she's been 'cooped up' in her apartment since March 12. (Submitted by France Rochon)

[2 comments](#)

[Listen to the full episode](#) 26:30



Questions & Comments