|  |
| --- |
| **Title of Research Presentation** An International Lens on food: Evaluating the barriers newcomer students at the University of Alberta face accessing nutritious and culturally appropriate foods. |
| **Background/Objectives**Research shows that newcomers’, defined as immigrant, refugee, or international student who has been in Canada for less than 5 years, diets change drastically when they arrive to Canada. Newcomer students’ beliefs, values, and culture heavily influence their understanding of healthy eating and hence understanding these students’ perspectives provides valuable insight into their dietary patterns and will allow campus to create programming to better support these students in accessing culturally relevant and nutritious foods. This study’s objectives were to define the role of maintaining ethnic diets in Canada to different populations of newcomer students and the challenges they face to eating this way, as well as potential way to help alleviate these challenges. **Methods**This research was structured as a community needs assessment, where data was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews and focus groups with newcomer students from various countries. **Results**45 students from 24 different countries partook in this research study. Data showed that students prefer having the choice to maintain their ethnic dietary patterns most saliently to maintain cultural sustainability. In terms of being able to recreate these ethnic diets and access nutritious meals we found that barriers fell into four categories: planning meals, shopping, cooking, and consumption. We also found that students are underutilizing campus resources and that a lot of the barriers found disappeared when students had some form of social support. **Discussion**Students expressed that programming must be applicable and appealing to newcomer students and that newcomer students often use different channels of communication which is underutilized by service providers. Creating programming that allows students to express their food identify and experiment with new food together leads to student empowerment and social support. Hence, having the ability to connect and learn from other peers can help students more easily adapt the Canadian food landscape to their own ethnic food diets and learn about new cultures, creating a more inclusive environment in our university. **Keywords**Food, Eating, Diet, Ethnicities,  |