

Assessing the Role of Small Food Retail in Alleviating Food Deserts

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Although low-income areas are often designated food deserts, small independently owned food retail stores can act as a crucial access point for low-income areas by providing affordable, healthy food options, and even fostering an equitable and sustainable food system in these communities. However, there remain uncertainties regarding whether communities that solely rely on small groceries experience diet-related challenges. Using grocery store data from the 2022 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Retailer Locator database and the 2023 CDC PLACES: Local Data for Better Health report, this research will employ Geographically Weighted Regression to assess the impact of small groceries in relation with diseases such as obesity and diabetes in low-income communities in Dallas. The findings from this research can be used to improve the current identification and practices aimed at reducing the impacts of food deserts in low-income urban communities and guide targeted local interventions that aim to improve community health.

Keywords: food deserts, Small retail stores, Diet-related diseases, low-income communities, Geographically Weighted Regression

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