

What FCHS Teen Participants Said

Contact the Lead Researcher:

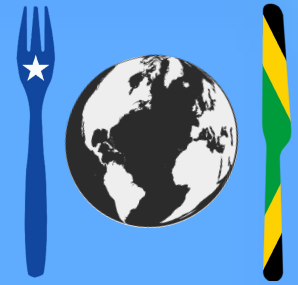
Dr. Gail M. Ferguson
Institute of Child Development
University of Minnesota
51 E. River Road, ChDev Rm 160
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Email: gmfergus@umn.edu

Web: icd.umn.edu/people/gmfergus/

Lab: <https://innovation.umn.edu/culture-and-family-life-lab/>

Phone: +1 (612) 626-3033



FOOD, CULTURE, & HEALTH STUDY

(Cuuno,
Caado,
& Caafimaad
Study)

"[COVID-19] has affected my eating habits, the activities I do and how I do them, as well as the way I attend school and complete school work."

🇯🇲 14-year-old Jamaican female

"I don't eat as many snacks as I did because I am not in school and I don't always have lunch. I have also developed a taste for more foods."

🇯🇲 14-year-old Jamaican female

"When I connect to people from Somalia like my family it gives me a sense of who I am and where I came from."

🇸🇴 17-year-old Somali male

"I am aware of...how social media affects the brain and ...[it]... is made to be addicting"

🇸🇴 15-year-old Somali male

"All the stuff that happened during the pandemic like George Floyd and other black Americans that were discriminated against"

🇸🇴 13-year-old Somali male

"Since the Virus there is all this talk about Black lives matter and so much more for me to see on social media about race."

🇯🇲 13-year-old Jamaican female

*Other Food, Culture, and Health Study co-investigators include:

Dr. Michelle Nelson
Dr. Lisa Harnack
Dr. Roli Dwivedi
Dr. Regina Ahn
Dr. Guerda Nicolas

Pamphlet created by
Hopewell Hodges, M.A. &
Gail M. Ferguson, Ph.D.



Executive Summary
Of Survey Results



Jamaican-born Dr. Gail M. Ferguson (left) and Somali-born Dr. Saida Abdi (right)

What is the Food, Culture, and Health Study (Cunno, Caado, & Caafimaad Study)?

The Food, Culture, and Health Study (FCHS) is a transdisciplinary research project that explores how culture and media use are linked to nutrition and health for Black U.S. teenagers from Jamaican and Somali families during the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and racism. This project was funded by the University of Minnesota.

The FCHS is spearheaded by Dr. Gail M. Ferguson in collaboration with Dr. Saida Abdi from the University of Minnesota, along with community partners, teen advisors, and other researchers.*

Why now?

We want to better understand the strengths and challenges of refugee and immigrant youth and families in Minnesota, Florida, and elsewhere as they work hard to stay healthy, especially during pandemic times. Our findings will help organizations, schools, families/caregivers, and professionals to better support youth and families in being healthy and resilient.

What did we do?

From December of 2020 to July of 2021, we gave online questionnaires to 11-18 year-old Somali American students from the Minneapolis Metro area in MN and Jamaican American students in the Miami Metro area in FL. The questionnaire asked things like:

- What are your **eating** habits?
- Which **cultures** do you identify with (Somali, Jamaican, African American, European American, and others)? How do you connect with them?
- How and how often do you use **media** like TV, smartphone apps, and video games?
- How **healthy** do you feel overall?

What did we find?

Nutrition:

Teens with a stronger Jamaican or Somali identity ate less fast food. In addition, teens who spent more time connecting to their heritage culture from afar ate more fruits and vegetables, had higher grades, and had closer bonds with parents.

Culture:

About 1 in every 3 teens were tricultural, feeling very connected to their own Jamaican or Somali culture, African American culture, and also mainstream White American culture. Teens often connected to their heritage cultures by cooking/eating and by talking to people abroad.

Media:

Teens spent an average of 52 hours a week on screens outside online classes. Screen time was lower for teens who communicated with their parents more often, who felt like their parents supported their independence, and whose parents discussed their media content and use with them. Students who believed that they had good skills to manage their own screen time also thought that they had better overall health.

What did we find? (continued)

Mental Health:

Tricultural teens who blended their heritage culture, African American, and White American cultures had the highest sense of belonging and felt the lowest levels of emotional turmoil during the dual pandemics. Many teens started thinking about race and culture more or in new ways due to observations or experiences of racial discrimination. However, feeling a greater sense of belonging in their lives and communities protected teens from feeling depressed or anxious when they faced discrimination.

What Does This Mean?

For Teens

You have shown so *many strengths* despite the challenges during the dual pandemics! This is called *resilience*. Don't forget that having a strong cultural identity as a Jamaican American or Somali American (and staying connected to that culture through cooking or phone/ videochat) can be good for your health, your family life, and your grades. Remember that teens with a multicultural identity feel more accepted and included, which can help you cope when you feel discriminated against.

For Parents and Caregivers

Helping your teenagers connect to their heritage during these pandemics may be helping them have better eating habits, better grades, and a stronger bond with you! Supporting their connections to your heritage culture *and* to the American cultures around them may also protect their mental health. As you parent your teens around media use, make sure you're also giving them *skills* so they can build healthy, safe media habits. Learn more at tinyurl.com/fchs22.