Animation Script

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Inspiring the next generation

Public Health Research
with Dr. Deepak Palakshappa

To make the most out of this script, you could:

- Stick it in your notebook as a record of watching Deepak's animation
- Pause the animation and make notes as you go
- Add your own illustrations to the sheet
- Create your own animation to accompany it
- Add notes from classroom discussions
- Make notes of areas you will investigate further
- Make notes of key words and definitions
- Add questions you would like answered – you can message Deepak through the comments box at the bottom of his article: **www.futurumcareers.com/public-health-research-with-dr-deepak-palakshappa**

SCRIPT:

During his time at college and university, Deepak volunteered with a community engagement program, delivering meals to older, home-bound adults. Over time, he became familiar with the people that he visited and listened to their stories, inspiring him to think about how he could find a career that would allow him to help others.

Deepak also worked for a non-profit organization, teaching mathematics to children from lower-income neighborhoods. He saw firsthand how poverty impacted both their education and their health.

During his medical training, Deepak noticed that many of his patients couldn't afford their medication because they were struggling to pay for food. These experiences inspired Deepak to focus his research on food insecurity and social determinants of health.

Today, Deepak is a public health researcher at Wake Forest University School of Medicine. He is investigating how healthcare systems can lessen food insecurity and improve health outcomes for households across the US.

Food insecurity is the inability to access adequate food due to a lack of money or other resources. But food insecurity does not always mean going hungry; it can also mean only having access to foods with low-nutritional value, such as cheap fast food.

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Food insecurity can increase the risk of obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure, as well as mental health conditions, such as chronic stress, anxiety, and depression.

Food insecurity can affect some family members more than others. Parents and guardians may be constantly worried about being able to feed their children, and they may compensate by skipping meals to ensure that their children have enough to eat.

But children are also affected. They can often tell when their caregivers are stressed by food insecurity, and which of their classmates come from food-insecure households, which can affect their relationships with their peers.

Although the US is a developed country, more than one in eight households live with food insecurity. Some nationwide interventions have been developed which provide financial support to help people buy food. Unfortunately, not everyone is eligible for these support programs.

Additionally, competing priorities, like work and childcare, can make it hard to find the time and energy needed to apply for them.

Deepak's research focuses on developing new interventions and studying how they can improve the lives of people living with food insecurity. In one study, Deepak's team delivers meals to food-insecure households and examines whether this helps to alleviate high blood pressure.

Deepak works closely with practitioners in healthcare clinics to make sure that they have the tools that they need to identify and support patients who are suffering from food insecurity. He hopes that this will help to alleviate food insecurity across the US.

Now that you've heard Deepak's story, what could you achieve as a public health researcher?

Let us know what you think of this educational and career resource. To provide input, simply scan the QR code or use this link: **redcap.school.wakehealth.edu/surveys/?s=NPK347RYHCR3FNDC**