

Luis's Results Section of Literature Review

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▪ Is socioeconomic status a determining factor to higher childhood obesity in the United States? An unprecedented rise in obesity across the board has been observed in the United States. Obesity continues to rise at an exponential rate, a higher obesity rate has been noted at an early onset in children. The following authors focus primarily on the socioeconomic status of these children which in turn leads to an overall higher obesity rate for communities on the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum.

2. Socioeconomic Status and Childhood Obesity

2.1 Education and Childhood Obesity

With socioeconomic status being the single most important determining factor of childhood obesity and the individuals education, education of both the individual at stake and most importantly in this case the parents are guardians prove to play a significant role in health overall. Education lays an important foundation in any individuals lives and the driving force behind how the individuals will shape their lives and subsequently the lives of their children. Thus, it is critical that we consider what is causing the surge of obesity among children. The study conducted by Mary Huynhm, Luisa Borrell, Earle Chambers (2001) examines the connection between maternal education and excessive weight gain and socioeconomic status. In this case a sample of 56,911 New York City births between 1999 and 2001 are used. The study reckons that Women with less than college education, therefore a lower socioeconomic status is consequently more likely to gain excessive weight during gestation period. Gopal Singh (2007) states an increase of the prevalence of obesity in children whose parents have less than 12 years of education. A rise of about 30.4% was noted in comparison to children whose parents obtained a college degree. In addition, Li Yanfeng (2008) also emphasizes the importance of education and obesity, it was found that lower education levels further precipitates obesity leading to children thinking of themselves as poor students thus affecting their education. Lydian Veldhuis (2013) also finds in her study that monumental impact that education has on obesity. On average the study concludes that women with less than a highschool education had children which 36% were either overweight or obese. Overall education

adversely affects lifestyle and dietary patterns and as a result increase the propensity of obesity in these subsequent areas.

2.2 Socioeconomic Status and Childhood Obesity

Extensive research has been conducted to come to this conclusion. The study by Patricia Martens, Daniel Chateau, Elaine, Burland (2014) explore the differences in health between children in social housing neighborhoods from ages 0 to 19 years old. Social Housing is typically a property which is owned by the government. The goals of social housing is to offer affordable accommodations in housing for individuals with low or limited income. With that being said these areas for the most part rank low on socioeconomic status. These areas in turn have been attributed to having high childhood obesity rates when compared to areas with higher socioeconomic status. The study was focused primarily in the city of Winnipeg and examined those with a yearly income of 34,642 and concentrate on their children. In conclusion Patricia Martens, Daniel and Elaine find that approximately 47% of the children in social housing has overall poorer health when comparing them to children in other neighborhoods who also lived in social housing however with higher socioeconomic status. Additionally, similar results are produced by Lourdes Navalpotro (2012) this study focusses on evaluation the relationship between socioeconomic status and area based environments. The prevalence of obesity was on average 1.45 times higher in children living in areas of low wealth when compared to areas with higher wealth. With the influx of areas of low wealth and high wealth however Lourdes highlights the disparities when it comes to the availability of facilities. For the most part areas of low socioeconomic status lacked the availability of parks and sports and recreational facilities further increasing the likelihood of childhood obesity. Finally, consistently throughout the study, lower per capita income of the family of the child was directly proportional to the overall obesity rate of the area examined. Moreover, Laura C. Senese, Nisha Almeida (2009) further support the link between socioeconomic status and childhood obesity. Among the male and females studied a significant association is found when examining children than with their adult

counterparts. From the children examined 40% of males and 100% of females in the United States obesity rates was directly linked to the socioeconomic environment in which they resided. Gopal Singh (2007) describes the increase in childhood obesity from 2003 to 2007 of 10% for all children but an astonishing 33% for children of from a low socioeconomic status. The disparities associated with childhood obesity is apparent in various aspects of society Joy Piontak (2016) finds rural counties to have significantly higher rates of childhood obesity. With the study focusing primarily on rural counties 80% of the sampled individuals are from a rural community. When examining schools and their effect on childhood obesity, Joy finds that those attending schools with a higher than average poverty level in turn had the same increase in obesity. The importance of the school system is emphasized here since they can provide an assortment of obesity prevention programs as well as promoting of healthy eating habits. Again, however the availability of these services and programs seems to be relatively nonexistent in areas with extreme poverty which as a result receive less funding to promote wellbeing.

2.3 Impact of Childhood Obesity

A variety of problems are associated with childhood obesity, In the early developmental stage of a child, it is essential for the body that an adequate and nutritious food is provided. Adequate nutrition is needed in order to help further development at both a cognitive level and a physical level. Li Yanfeng (2008) found that a notable decrease in cognitive function was associated with a significant amount of weight gain. The studies focused primarily on cognitive function abilities such as memory quality, abstract reasoning, and attention span all essential for the ability of any individuals to be successful in today's demanding world affecting their education and lifestyle throughout their adult life. Furthermore, this study highlights the onslaught of diseases that are always accompanied by obesity. The adverse effects of diabetes mellitus and cardiovascular disease have proven to have devastating effects throughout

an individual's life particularly when these diseases are acquired at a young age. Li discusses the sensitivity of the human brain and its susceptibility to damage from external factors. The study consequently attributes the decrease of cognitive function and in some cases impairment to the vascular changes such as atherosclerosis which can lead to stroke brought on by increased blood pressure brought on by obesity. The devastating effects of childhood obesity primarily in individuals with low socioeconomic status are further supported by D Carroll and G. Davey Smith (1999). Confirmatory evidence is found with a link between low socioeconomic status and the progression of atherosclerosis. D. and Davey come to this conclusion through aerobic exercise where the potential fitness levels of children from low socioeconomic statuses are measured. Preliminary results supported the fact that individuals from low socioeconomic status in fact ranked lower in terms of fitness ability when compared to others. Socioeconomic status not only has a significant impact on the physical body but also affects mental state of an individual. Darla E Kendzor, Margaret O Caughy and Margaret Own (2012) further support the fact that socioeconomic status can influence the development of unhealthy health conditions. The study found that low income families showed a higher propensity to adiposity during their teenage years. Mary Huynh, Luisa Borrell, Earle Chambers (2001) describe the psychological stress that comes, with the day to day life of a low socioeconomic status individual. These increased stress levels can be accredited to lower available income to sustain one's self, high crime rates in the area and general social disarray in the area. These factors in conjunction with an increased proclivity to obesity negatively affect the overall welfare of the individual.

3. Discussion

Childhood obesity continues to climb at an astonishing rate. With this increase is the never-ending gap between those with low socioeconomic status and the extremely wealthy. This gap between the two groups continues to grow just as quickly as the obesity rates. Low Socioeconomic status promotes the increase of childhood obesity, while many factors can increase this change poverty continues to play a significant role. Low socioeconomic communities lack the availability of social services and funds for community wide health initiatives to promote a healthy lifestyle. Most importantly however is the lack of education that these individuals receive which directly affects their lifestyle choices for themselves as well as those around them.

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