

“The Impact of Poverty on Nutrition and Health”

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Poor Nutrition and Physical Activity

- Food selection
- Food choice
- Food preference
- Exercise
- Accessibility
- Affordability

Resources

- Today, a wealth of nutrition information is at your finger tips. From diet books to newspaper articles, everyone seems to have an opinion about what you should be eating. It's no secret that good nutrition plays an essential role in maintaining health.
- What resources do we utilize to access nutrition information?

Definition of Poverty

- Poverty statistics are based on definitions originally developed by the Social Security Administration. These include a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition. Families or individuals with income below their appropriate thresholds are classified as below the poverty level. These thresholds are updated annually by the U.S. Bureau of the Census to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers (CPI-U).

Poverty and Health Status

- Poverty and health status are interrelated, and their effects on each other are often bidirectional: poverty leads to poor health and poor health leads to poverty. In addition, life challenges associated with poverty, whether short- or long-term, create conditions that reduce household savings, lower learning ability, and reduce physical and emotional well-being, all of which endanger people's health.

Effects of Poverty

- the effects of poverty go beyond the individual. Poverty affects a community's ability to support capital improvements; to build and maintain schools; to provide health care services; and to provide policing, social, and sanitation services.

Poverty

- It seems obvious that poor people experience a high burden of disease, often die prematurely, and have a poor quality of life. What is not so obvious is that the health of the poor appears to worsen as the national gap between rich and poor widens.

The U.S. Population and Obesity

The CDC reported that 66% of the U.S. adult population is overweight or obese as of 2004

If this trend continues 75% of the U.S. adult population will be overweight or obese by 2015

\$100 billion in health care cost annually

112,000 deaths annually

Obesity is soon to become the #1 preventable cause of death in the U.S.

Obesity Trends* Among U.S. Adults

BRFSS, 1990, 1995, 2005

(*BMI ≥ 30 , or about 30 lbs overweight for 5'4" person)

1990

1995

2005



The Problem in Arizona

- 56% of Arizona adults are overweight or obese
- 14.7% of Children under the age of 5 are overweight
- 26% of Arizona high school students are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight

(CDC BRFSS 2006; CDC PedNSS 2005; CDC YRBSS 2003)

Disease and Illness: Poor Nutrition and Health

Higher Risk for Medical Complications

- Asthma
- Joint Problems
- Osteoporosis
- High Blood Pressure
- High Cholesterol
- Gallbladder disease

Type 2 Diabetes a “pediatric disease”

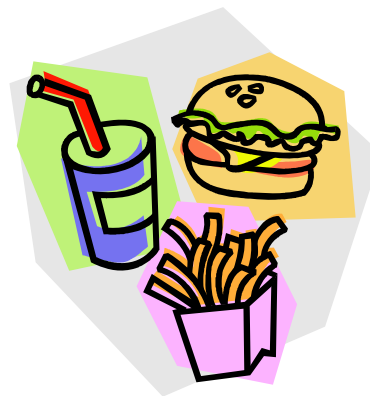
10 fold increase 1 in 3 children are at risk

Hidden Dangers of Poor Nutrition

- Obesity
- Depression
- Learning and Attention Disorders
- Social Isolation
- Health Issues

Why are Kids Overweight

- Fats and sugars
- Ultra processed and convenience foods
- Overabundance of sweets and snack foods
- Fast food
- Risky health behaviors



Examining Poverty as a Health Determinant

- Do healthier diets cost more?
- On a per calorie basis, diets composed of fruits, vegetables and grains are far more expensive than diets comprised with sugars and added fats.
- What is the impact of access to health care?
- What is the impact of family history?

- Drewnowski (2004) has publicly noted that access to healthier diets could be sharply limited in low-income neighborhoods, simply because the food environment and the nature of the available food supply.

What are the high calorie/fat foods?

- French fries
- Deep fried meats
- Soft drinks
- Candy
- Cookies
- Salty items



Proper nutrition is simply a matter of making
the right food choices.

How does our environment impact nutrition and health

- What is a food environment?
- A food environment is access and resources for food selection on a daily basis.

Obesity Disparities

- The increase in obesity and disparities in obesity and related chronic diseases across racial and ethnic and income groups have led researchers to focus on the social and environmental factors that influence dietary intake.

Communities

- Examining community supermarkets and fast food restaurants to assess location and availability of food choices that enable individuals to meet the dietary guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (e.g., fruit and vegetable consumption, low-fat options).

Food Markets

- The spatial distribution of fast food restaurants and supermarkets that provide options for meeting recommended dietary intake differed according to racial distribution and poverty rates. Mixed-race or white high-poverty areas and all African American areas (regardless of income) were less likely than predominantly white higher-income communities to have access to foods that enable individuals to make healthy choices.

What is the role of the Health Professional?

- The cycle of poverty and poor health requires a balance of interventions from public health professionals, researchers, public officials and those in public service (ie. schools, government).
- Continue Research
- Further Education and Training
- Examine Populations
- Diversify Approach
- Identify Resources

Strategies to Improve the Health of the Poor

- **Act on the determinants of health by influencing policy.**
- **Ensure that health systems serve the poor effectively**
- **Focus on the health problems that disproportionately affect the poor**
- **Reduce health risks through a broad approach to public health**

Research

- Recent findings indicate that rates of obesity are higher among some racial and ethnic minority groups as well as among lower-income groups.

Are people poor by choice?

- People are not poor by choice and therefore, people do not always choose to practice poor health behaviors.

What others socio-economic factors play a role?

- Education
- Marital status
- Ethnicity
- Culture
- gender

The Media, Marketing and Poor Nutrition

- Many strategies of food companies and restaurants promote fast, unhealthy food.
- If food companies committed to establishing a responsible role in the community then we may impact the diet and nutrition of those living in and outside of poverty.

Genetics can predict obesity, can your zip code?

- Food environment
- Transportation
- Community involvement
- Employment
- Social outings

Ethnic Groups

- Hispanics are the fastest growing demographic group in the United States; however, “Hispanic” is a broad term that describes people who are from or whose ancestors are from multiple countries of origin.

Factors associated with ethnic groups and poor nutrition

- Gender
- Age
- Education
- Number of children
- Health status
- Marital status
- Acculturation
- Healthcare
- Binge drinking

Linking Research to our Community

- Needs Assessment
- Strategic Planning
- Funding
- Prevention and Intervention
- Education
- Evaluation

Gender and Age

- Among children, the relationship between socioeconomic status and overweight prevalence is stronger among white women. Among Mexican American and non-Hispanic black children and adolescents, family income does not reliably predict overweight prevalence.

Summary

- Without access to healthy food choices, individuals cannot make positive changes to their diets. If certain eating behaviors are required to reduce chronic disease and promote health, then some communities will continue to have disparities in critical health outcomes unless we increase access to healthy food.

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