Identifying Multidimensional Causes of Obesity and Solutions in the United States

By

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PURPOSE OF PRESENTATION

- Introduction/Background
- Purpose/Public Health Problem
- Methods
- Results/Discussion
- Conclusion
- Acknowledgements
- References
INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND TO THE UNITED STATES OBESITY EPIDEMIC

- 36.5% U.S. population are obese
- 17% U.S. children are obese
- Costs 147 billion dollars in health care dollars annually
- 300,000 preventable deaths due to complications related

Source: CDC
PURPOSE OF PAPER

- Address and acknowledge the multidimensional causes of obesity
- Discuss the impact of this epidemic on the United States
- Discuss the political, economical and cultural context
- Describe the role of public health
- Present findings from Oneida County, Wisconsin
- Provide effective, evidence-based solutions

Source: http://drlinda-md.com/2016/03/causes-obesity-not-just-calories/
METHODS

LITERATURE REVIEW
(key searches)

1. Food deserts
2. Childhood obesity
3. Fast food
4. Portion control
5. School lunch programs
6. Obesity policy/funding
7. Physical activity
8. Nutrition
9. Worksite wellness
10. Disparities in obesity prevalence (SES)

INTERVIEWS

1. Participant one, Community Health Specialist for Oneida County Health Department
2. Participant two, Family Living Educator for Oneida County through the University of Wisconsin Extension
RESULTS & DISCUSSION - KEY FINDINGS

PROBLEM: ACCESS TO HEALTHY, WHOLESOME FOOD

FAST FACTS:

- 15 million children suffer from food insecurity
- 9.2% of all housing units have no vehicle and 4.2% are at least five miles from a grocery store
- Fast food restaurants rose from 30,000 in 1970 to 233,000 in 2004

TAKEAWAYS:

- People are living in food deserts across the nation

SOLUTION(S):

- Community based gardens
- Expand and offer affordable, healthy options at all locations where food is available
RESULTS & DISCUSSION - KEY FINDINGS

PROBLEM: LACK OF EDUCATION/RESOURCES

FAST FACTS:
- 21% of the population meets physical activity guidelines (‘08)
- Limited resources are available and not always affordable for target population
- Children ages 8-18 spend nearly eight hours per day looking at a screen
- 33% of young children do not eat any fruits or vegetables on a given day

TAKEAWAYS:
- There needs to be a greater investment in education for obesity prevention

SOLUTION(S):
- Offer wellness/nutrition programs to children and parents at schools, community centers, etc.
- Offer community activities to encourage proper nutrition and physical activity
RESULTS & DISCUSSION - KEY FINDINGS

PROBLEM: WORKPLACE CULTURE

FAST FACTS:

- 36% of hours spent awake are spent at work
- One study showed that for every $1 invested in employee wellness, $3.48 was saved in healthcare costs
- 39 million workdays are lost to obesity-related illnesses each year

TAKEAWAYS:

- There is sufficient evidence that proves the value of implementing worksite wellness programs

SOLUTION:

- Employers need to invest and understand the benefits of worksite wellness by utilizing the toolkit provided by the Department of Health Services
RESULTS & DISCUSSION - KEY FINDINGS

PROBLEM: FUNDING

FAST FACTS:

- 3% of the health care budget is spent on public health interventions
- Some government programs are too flexible for participants (SNAP)

TAKEAWAYS:

- Our society tends to focus more on secondary and tertiary prevention
- “The obesity epidemic has huge economic consequences, and we have not even begun to pay the full cost” (Willett)

SOLUTION:

- Generate an economic shift that focuses more on primary prevention through public health interventions
RESULTS & DISCUSSION - KEY FINDINGS

PROBLEM: SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

FAST FACTS:
- Those who make $15,000 or less per year make up 33% of obese population
- African Americans have the highest obesity rate at 48%
- Those who did not graduate high school are more likely to be obese

TAKEAWAYS:
- There are underlying socioeconomic factors that need to be addressed to decrease obesity rates

SOLUTION:
- Stakeholders must understand how socioeconomic factors are impacting the opportunity to access resources and education
RESULTS & DISCUSSION - KEY FINDINGS

PROBLEM: CULTURE

FAST FACTS:
- The United States spends the most money on health care, yet it is one of the sickest developed nations in the world

TAKEAWAYS:
- Stakeholders have individual agendas and primary prevention has not been a priority

SOLUTION:
- Stakeholders must come together for the common goal of improving health outcomes to sustain a successful, productive economy
CONCLUSION

- In order to make sustainable improvements to the obesity epidemic, there needs to be a cultural shift that entails all stakeholders coming together to invest in resources and education through public health interventions.
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