



The Impact of Race on Parents' Perception of Obesity

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Objective

- Highlight trends in childhood obesity, especially among preschool-aged children
- Discuss the influence of parents in their child becoming overweight or obese
- Review research indicating parents have trouble perceiving their child as overweight or obese
- Present a recent paper identifying differences in parental perception of their preschool child's overweight or obesity by racial/ethnic groups
- Explore opportunities for further research



Trends in Childhood Obesity

- Growing prevalence of childhood obesity and overweight over the past thirty years
 - Obesity among children increased from 5% to 15% since 1970s
 - Overweight increased from 5% to 14% among preschool-aged children
- Racial differences in children's overweight and obesity
 - Highest among Hispanic and Pacific Islander children



Parent's Role

- Parents have tremendous influence on their child's weight
- Ways to impact child's weight in early childhood
 - Control of food intake
 - Exposure to a variety of healthful foods
 - Activity Level
- Research indicates a lack of awareness among parents about children's weight problems but not by race



Linares, Gaare Bernheim, & McGarvey Paper: Objectives

- To examine if parental perception of overweight and/or obesity in their preschool child varies by race
- To help in the development of more effective public health strategies to prevent or reduce childhood overweight and obesity in the United States

Linaires et al. Paper: Data

Data Main Characteristics (n = 344)


Children's age	Mean =3.11 std= 0.83
Parent's age	Mean =32.9 std=6.44
Children's BMI	
Average or less	53.8
Overweight	20.2
Obese	25.7
Parent's Education level	
Some grade school	15.3
High School	40.8
College	28.9
Some Grad School	5.2
Relationship	
Mother	90.8
Father	8.0
Grandmother	0.6
Legal Guardian/Foster	0.6

**Focus on
Preschoolers**

Linaires et. al Paper: Data by Race

Weight Prevalence Among Races								
Race	All		Average weight		Overweight		Obese	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
White	73	21.3	39	53.4	15	20.5	19	26.0
Black	50	14.6	29	58.0	13	26.0	8	16.0
Hispanic	184	53.8	97	52.7	39	21.2	48	26.1
Asian/ Pacific Islander	35	10.2	19	54.3	3	8.6	13	37.1
Total	342		184		70		88	

Over 45% of preschoolers in study population overweight or obese



Linares' et. al Paper: Measure of Parent's Perception

- *“In your opinion is your 2-4 year old child overweight?”*
 - 82% of parents do not think their child is overweight or obese
 - Only 6.6% of parents think their child is overweight
 - 7.3% of the parents do not know whether their child is overweight



Linaires' et. al. Paper: Main Conclusions

- 77% of the parents of obese children do not perceive their child as obese
- Statistically significant differences in races about parents' perception of obesity was found
 - Hispanic parents are more aware of their child's obesity than white parents
 - In general, white and black parents do not recognize their child's overweight/obesity



Conclusion

- Intervention and prevention strategies should include educating parents on how to recognize weight problems in their child
- Additional research is needed to determine why perception varies between different races/ethnicities