Addressing Obesity in African American Communities: Expanding the Paradigm

Overview
Audio will start with the next slide

- Context
- Expanded causal paradigm
- AACORN’s expanded paradigm
- Follow up
  - Linking AACORN’s paradigm to broader community issues
  - Linking AACORN’s paradigm to mainstream obesity research
  - Using paradigm to drive research design and implementation

In the News: U.S. Population Is Now One-Third Minority

- (May 2006) New U.S. Census Bureau estimates for 2005 show that 98 million people in the United States — about 33 percent of the total U.S. population of 296.4 million — are part of a racial or ethnic minority group. In addition, 45 percent of children under age 5 are minorities.

Percent of U.S. Non-Hispanic Black Men and Women Above Overweight and Obesity Cutoffs: 1999-2002

BMI 25+= overweight or obese
BMI 30+= obese (Class I, II, or III)
BMI 40+= Class III or extremely obese

% of U.S. Non-Hispanic Black Boys and Girls Above Overweight and Obesity Cutoffs: 1999-2002

BMI 85th percentile and over = at risk of overweight
BMI 95th percentile and over = overweight

Trends in Adult Obesity

Note: Data are for ages 20 years and over, age adjusted to the 2000 standard population. Obesity is defined as BMI ≥ 30.0.

Source: Hedley et al, JAMA 2004;2847-2850 (June 16)
Trends in the prevalence (%) of overweight in American children and adolescents during 1976-2002, by sex and ethnicity (Younger Children)

Boys (6-11 y) Girls (6-11 y)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>White, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Black, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Mexican Am</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976-80</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>13.1</td>
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<td>1988-94</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>22.8</td>
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<td>1999-02</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
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Trends in the prevalence (%) of overweight in American children and adolescents during 1976-2002, by sex and ethnicity (Adolescents)

Adolescent boys (12-19 y) Adolescent girls (12-19 y)

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<td>1976-80</td>
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<td>1988-94</td>
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<td>13.4</td>
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Wang & Kumanyika in press

Population BMI Change

The shifting distributions of BMI of five population groups of men and women aged 20-59 years derived from 52 surveys in 32 countries.

Schematic Representations of BMI Distribution Models

U.S. children & youth U.S. adults


Global Prevalence of Overweight in Girls

Prior to 1990
Global Prevalence of Overweight in Girls
2000-2006

Global Prevalence of Overweight in Boys
Prior to 1990

Global Prevalence of Overweight in Boys
2000-2006

Paradigm shift

- Obesity levels reflect changes in society
  - Economic development
  - Modernization and technology
  - Urbanization
  - Food production and marketing
  - Patterns of media use
  - Women’s roles

Excess environmental risk in communities of color: Access

- Targeted marketing
- Excess fast food outlets
- Few supermarkets
- Limited shelf choices in groceries
- Availability of high-fat food
- Less private transportation
- Poorer public transportation

Source: International Obesity Task Force [www.iotf.org]
see Kumanyika S et al International Journal of Obesity 2002;26:425-36

Yancy AK, Kumanyika SK, et al. review. Preventing Chronic Disease
Available from: URL: http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2004/jan/03_0012.htm
Excess environmental risk in communities of color: Economics

- Low neighborhood demand for low cal/low fat foods
- Low family incomes and cash flow
- Other household expenses
- Little home-grown food
- Financial incentives offered to under-resourced schools by commercial cafeteria vendors


AACORN’s Purpose and Rationale

- To improve the quality, quantity, and effective translation of research to address weight issues in African American communities
  - Extremely low representation of African American issues in the obesity and related literatures, coupled with extremely high need for attention to obesity and related issues in the African American community
  - Potential benefits of a cross-mentoring model for African American scholars with relevant interests
  - Need for an expanded obesity research paradigm

African American Collaborative Obesity Research Network (AACORN)

- Researchers across the US with diverse interests and expertise related to African American health, especially food, nutrition, weight, weight related health problems and women’s health
  - African American and selected other scholars
  - Early career scholars, established scholars, and scholars in training
  - Community research partners

Research Focus: What is the Question?

- Interventions on eating, physical activity, and weight in African Americans

“...In order to gain the most out of this session, I encourage each of you to lay aside the usual framework that you use to take in information at scientific meetings and imagine that you have awakened, like Dorothy and Toto, and found yourself in Oz, where all that you know no longer governs all that is...”
Expanded Knowledge Domains

- Cultural & Psychosocial Processes
- Historical & Social Contexts
- Physical & Economic Environments

*Focus of traditional obesity research

Research Lenses: Who is Looking? Listening?

African Americans in researched communities

African American researchers in general and research sponsors

Where does this lead us?

Community and Family Life

- Community-specific environmental influences
- Community structure and organization
- Women as a central focus
- Heterogeneity

Community and Family Life

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Jarrett... Qualitative sociological research, Chicago South Side

- Gaining a sense of contexts, routines, and rhythms
- All types of family structures and family dynamics
- Families “subsidizing” communities
- Resource pools, daily routines
- Strong normative support for self-sacrificing mothers

Sheftall...literary works cited

- Becky W. Thompson, Black Female, Hungry and Hurting
- Retha Powers, Fat is a Black Woman’s Issue (Essence, 1989)
- bell hooks, Sisters of the Yam
- Gloria Naylor, Linden Hills
- Alice Walker, Meridian
- Gayle Pemberton, The Hottest Water in Chicago
- Toni Morrison, The Bluest Eye
- June Jordan, Free Flight (in Passion, New Poems)
One response

- Is America ready for African Americans to be healthy?

Historical Legacy and Core Values

- Historical importance of trust
- Collective trauma

McGary…spiritual and philosophical underpinning

- What can we learn from the methods and teaching of philosophy?
- Recognize three important African American community values—
  - Loyalty (rationale and empirically validated)
  - Trustworthiness
  - Justice
    - Framed as rights of individuals and groups ("non-consequentialist" view), not justice in terms of the good of society as a whole (consequentialist view)

James Myers…Collective Psyche

- Importance of culture
- Uniqueness of African American experience
- Emphasis on achieving optimal health
- Collective and individual adaptations
- Changes across generations

Ethnographic and literary content analysis

- Ethnographic research methods
- Literary representations of African American life

Engaging Communities

- Community members as equal research partners
- Community strengths
- Benefits to researched communities
Leveraging Insider Status

- Trust and credibility
- Connections to communities of reference
- Objectivity and expectations
- Social and professional support

Outline

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Participatory Research on African American Community Weight Issues: Defining the State of the Art

- 2nd National Invited Workshop: August 2006
  - CBPR concepts and principles and potential implementation regarding weight interventions
  - What constitutes a successful research project to community residents?
  - What is involved in conducting research in communities?

Participatory Research on African American Community Weight Issues: Defining the State of the Art

- Community priorities other than obesity (e.g., housing, violence and incarceration) that may be more immediate than those related to obesity and how these interface with efforts to address obesity; and
- Model CBPR programs (on any topic)
- Views of funders and scientific journal editors

Linking to obesity research mainstream (examples)

- Cultural and psychosocial processes
- Overeating and stress
- Information
- Health services
- Physical and economic environments
- Built environment
- Price
- Marketing
Research Design and Implementation

- Commitment to CBPR
- Think Tanks
- Broader Literature Reviews
- Consultant Pool
- Visibility and Critical Mass