



**Monday, June 13th, 2005**

**Diversity Workshop**

**"Obesity and Physical Activity among Minority Populations"**

**Harvard School of Public Health  
Kresge Building, Snyder Auditorium G-1  
665 Huntington Avenue  
(617) 432-3175 Biostatistics Department**



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**The Obesity Epidemic in the United States: Prevalence in Minority Populations and Associated Risks for Chronic Diseases.**

Obesity is a major epidemic in the United States. Currently, more than 60% of adults are overweight and almost one third are obese. Minority populations such as African Americans, Hispanic/Latinas, and Native Americans are disproportionately affected by obesity. Obesity is of great public health concern, because it is directly related to diabetes, hypertension, CVD, and other chronic conditions.



**Shiriki Kumanyika, PhD, MPH**

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**Reducing Obesity In Ethnic Minority Populations: Concepts And Controversies**

The Institute of Medicine has published a national action plan to guide the prevention of obesity in children and youth, highlighting the high risk of obesity and need for prevention among children in ethnic minority populations.\* Given that adults are affected by or control many of the same environments that affect children, most elements of the IOM plan are applicable to all ages. Dr. Kumanyika, who was a member of the committee that developed this report, will comment on the implications of this action plan for communities such as African Americans, Hispanic/Latinos and American Indians.

Obesity prevention is conceptually different from obesity treatment, and requires a population-based approach that addresses environmental factors embedded in both the larger society and local communities. This presentation will address specific considerations related to obesity prevention in ethnic minority communities, including the desirable balance between environmentally-oriented approaches to facilitate structural changes and individually-oriented approaches related to personal responsibility. Strategies likely to have an enhanced benefit for high risk communities will be identified. Controversial issues such as whether campaigns to prevent obesity will compete with more important community priorities or will aggravate stereotypes and increase stigmatization of the obese will be discussed.



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**Behavioral Strategies to Increase Physical Activity Among African Americans:**

This presentation will provide a review of the published literature on behavioral interventions to increase physical activity among African Americans. I will also highlight promising behavioral interventions, as highlighted in the forthcoming Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's resource guide entitled "Promoting Physical Activity Among Black Adults", which highlights several community-based physical activity programs. Implications and future recommendations for behavioral interventions to increase physical activity among African Americans will also be covered.



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**Reducing Cardiovascular Risk Factors in Black Families:  
The F.I.G.H.T. for Life Study**

Black Americans engage in the least amount of regular physical activity, exhibit an increased prevalence of obesity and have diets that are low in fruit and vegetable intake compared to other Americans. It is postulated that this unhealthy lifestyle contributes to the extremely high rates of cardiovascular disease and stroke in this population. It is for that reason that the Families Implementing Good Health Traditions for Life (FIGHT for Life) program was developed. This study utilizes the Transtheoretical Model along with Motivational Interviewing to encourage behavior change in the intervention families. FIGHT for Life is a community-based intervention study whose goal is to reduce blood pressure and cholesterol levels by improving physical activity and dietary habits among Black families.

## Modifiable Risk Factor Trends in US Hispanics by SES and Primary Language Spoken: 1982-2000.



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Little is known about cardiovascular disease(CVD) risk factors trends among Hispanics by socioeconomic status(SES) and primary language spoken (PLS=Spanish, English, bilingual). We calculated age-standardized rates of diabetes, hypertension, and obesity over three time periods based on customary risk factor criteria according to SES(education in years) and PLS. Data are limited to Hispanic respondents  $\geq$  aged 21 derived from HHANES, 1982-84, NHANES III, 1988-94, NHANES IV, 1994-00. Overall results revealed significant increases in rates of obesity and hypertension from 1982-84 to 1999-00 (12.6% [P<0.0001]; 4.0% [P<0.002]). Rate of diabetes was high in 1982-84 (5.8%) and did not change overtime. Rate of diabetes, however, increased among respondents who primarily spoke Spanish and among those with <12 years of education by 2.4% and 2.3%, respectively. Rate of obesity was lower among respondents with >12 years of education but dramatically increased over time (20.9%) compared to respondents with fewer years of education; a similar pattern was observed among those who were primarily English speaking and rates were lower among those who primarily spoke Spanish. Overall rate of hypertension was higher among bilingual respondents, and increased by 2.3%, but rate of increase was more dramatic among those who mainly spoke English and among those with > 12 years of education (5.3%; 7.1%). Our results reveal heterogeneity regarding variation in the prevalence of increasing risk factor trends among US Hispanics. Differences in SES and PLS may be masked by ethnicity. A more comprehensive database is needed to ascertain ethnic variability within the Hispanic population to tailor risk reduction efforts.



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**Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Prevention Among Minority Children:  
*Planet Health* and *Eat Well and Keep Moving***

*Eat Well and Keep Moving* and *Planet Health*, two research projects with numerous collaborators at Harvard and public schools, are school-based interventions that aim to promote healthy eating, increased physical activity, and decreased inactivity among children and adolescents. *Eat Well and Keep Moving*, funded by the Walton Family Foundation, targets 4th and 5th graders through nutrition and physical activity lessons that can be taught in the classroom, plus tools for creating a supportive school environment, including school-wide campaigns, improving school food service and promoting staff wellness. *Planet Health*, funded by the National Institute of Child Health & Human Development, is focused on middle schools and contains classroom lessons, physical fitness "micro-checks," and a school-wide campaign to reduce TV viewing. Designed to fit within existing curricula, both programs use an interdisciplinary approach to enhance program adoption and have been shown to reduce obesity risk factors. *Planet Health* was effective in preventing obesity among girls. Both programs are widely disseminated in the United States and other countries.

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