Creative Adoptions for Increasing Healthy Eating Habits for Low Socioeconomic Status Families

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**BACKGROUND**

A nutritious diet is essential for optimal human growth and well-being. Low SES families encounter economic, social and educational barriers which may obstruct their access to fresh produce and encourage unhealthy eating behaviors. Obesity and chronic lifestyle diseases are directly related to unhealthy eating behaviors. Researchers have discovered that low-SES individuals are harder to reach through standard lifestyle interventions. As a result, interventions must be modified and individualized in order to effectively target low SES communities. (Buulman et al., 2014)

**Barriers to Healthy Eating Habits**

**Education**

Research has discovered a genuine lack of knowledge with regard to people identifying and preparing healthy foods. If we do not extensively educate and learn about the food groups in school, how else would the general public be exposed to this type of information?

**Economics**

How does cost play an important role?

**Cost of Healthy vs. Unhealthy Foods**

In general, low SES individuals are concerned that eating healthy takes too much time and effort and will not change their lifestyle unless their physical health prompted them to do so.

**Cost of Time**

1 lb. of grapes = $4.99

Combo meal = less than $8

**Availability**

A food desert is a part of a country that has a limited amount of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthy whole foods available. This mainly due to a particular area lacking in access to farmer’s markets, grocery stores and healthy food providers. Food deserts do not necessarily mean these communities have no food available, but the food that is predominantly available is low in nutrient density and high in caloric intake.

**Culture**

Culture plays a significant role in what people eat. Some individuals believe that all traditional and ethnocentric foods are healthy in comparison to all unhealthy fast foods. This belief leads to the uninhibited consumption of traditional foods, regardless of their quality and hygiene.

**How is the Emerging American Culture Impacting the Eating Habits of Americans?**

- increasing availability of inexpensive food
- reduced necessity of manual work
- growth of sedentary recreational activities, and limited access to active lifestyles

**MED Theory**

alternative behaviors and promote positive attitudes towards healthy eating

share what you’ve learned with others and keep this lifestyle change engaging and relevant to you

**Proactive vs. Reactive Lifestyles**

Higher SES individuals tend to be more future minded that lower SES individuals. They experience less chronic stress and as a result have more ‘psychological space’ to better plan their day and make healthier lifestyle decisions. Why should you wait until you are diagnosed with obesity related diseases to change your lifestyle? We need to emphasize the importance of promoting a proactive not a reactive mindset.

**Suggested, New Occupation: Ethnonutritionist**

An occupation that will address how the culture of a nation and/or race impacts the overall nutrition of a family and recommends ways to overcome these barriers.

**Teaching Kitchens**

What if medical schools partnered with culinary schools and public health officials to form a “united front?”

**Government Intervention**

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<th>States Reallocate Revenue from Soft Drinks</th>
<th>Fund programs like “Teaching Kitchens”</th>
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<td>Ratio of Fresh Food Availability and Population Density</td>
<td>Paid Time off of Work for High Risk Obesity Patients</td>
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<td>Health Insurance Incentives for Healthy Behaviors</td>
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**Acknowledgements**

Dr. Laura Anderson PULSE Healthy Weight Research Team
UB School of Nursing
Ronald E. McNair Scholar TRiO Program

**References**


Bukman, Andrea J, Teuscher, Dorit, Feskens, Open, 3.

Databases Utilized:

- PubMed
- MEDLINE
- Government collected census data and resources

**Methodology - Preliminary Literature Review**

- 25+ Articles
- Keywords used: low SES, lifestyle interventions, obesity in relation to SES, economic and educational barriers in low SES populations, cultural impacts on food consumption