

Obesity epidemics related to racial ethnic differences



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Obesity Epidemics Related to Racial/Ethnic Differences

Kheesha Abreu

Obesity is becoming a serious health issue in the United States. Overweight is defined as having a body mass index between 25 and 29.9; obesity is defined as having a body mass index of 30 or more. The number of overweight and obese people is increasing every year. Statistics show “ that the number of overweight and obese individuals globally has increased from 857 million in 1980 to 2.1 billion in 2013”. If this obesity epidemic continues to rise then current and future generations will have a shorter life expectancy. The current number of deaths associated with obesity in the United States alone is between 112,000 and 300,000. Obesity is now considered as one of the most crucial health problems in the United States. Obesity rates differ between racial and ethnic minority groups and are influenced by environmental factors.

For the most part, non-Hispanic Blacks reside in the South more than any other race and it has been shown that the South states have the largest occurrence of obesity, followed by the Midwest, then the West, and lastly the Northeast. New Hampshire is the lowest obesity ranking state for non-Hispanic Blacks but five other U. S. states had a population of forty percent or more obese individuals: Alabama, Maine, Mississippi, Ohio, and Oregon. A study revealed that in 2011, non-Hispanic Black women were eighty percent more probable to be obese than non-Hispanic White women. Also, in 2010, non-Hispanic Black adults were seventy percent less likely to engage in physical activity compared to non-Hispanic White adults. The stereotype is

that in the South you eat a lot of fried chicken, mash potatoes and gravy, corn bread, biscuits, etc. these types of foods plus a sedentary lifestyle can be a factor to the high levels of obesity.

When focusing on Hispanics, the highest occurrence of obesity was in the Midwest, followed by the South, then the West, and then the Northeast. Maryland was the lowest ranking state for Hispanics and Tennessee was the highest ranking state in terms of obesity. In 2011, Hispanic adults were thirty percent less likely than non-Hispanic White adults to engage in any kind of physical activity. Plus, Hispanics eat a lot of unhealthy foods, such as white and/or yellow rice, fried plantains, fried salami, fried cheese, tamales, etc. These foods have a high calorie count and low levels of healthy nutrients. Another reason why Hispanics are higher on the obesity scale may be because Hispanics like to be curvy and voluptuous; so they do not see their body image as bad or unhealthy. In 2010, Abbey Berenson and her colleagues went to public health clinics in Texas where they surveyed 1, 076 Hispanic women about their weight. “ The researchers found about twenty five percent of the overweight Hispanic women perceived their weight as “ normal,” while only fifteen percent of non-Latino white women did” (Rodriguez, 2013).

When looking at non-Hispanic Whites, the greatest occurrence of obesity was in the Midwest, followed by the South, then the Northeast, and then the West. Virginia was the lowest obesity level state but five of the other states had a population which was twenty percent or less obese than the rest of the nation: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, and New Mexico. Non-Hispanic Whites tend to be less overweight than non-Hispanic Blacks and <https://assignbuster.com/obesity-epidemics-related-to-raciaethnic-differences/>

Hispanics but are presumed to be sixty percent more likely to be obese than non-Hispanic Asians.

Furthermore, non-Hispanic Asians are the opposite of non-Hispanic Blacks and Hispanics. It is actually somewhat uncommon for non-Hispanic Asians to be considered obese; less than eleven percent of Asian adults are in the heavyweight category. In reality, about one in every ten Vietnamese and Korean adults are underweight. When looking at obesity, compared to the overall Asian population, Filipino adults are considered seventy percent more probable to be obese. The communities they live in probably have more supermarkets with healthy foods, such as whole foods. They may be advertising reduced sugar or no sugar products. Also, people may simply exercise more often, or there is less use of motor transportation.

Environmental factors contribute to the epidemic of obesity. Racial and ethnic groups have different lifestyle behaviors that affect weight gain. For example, non-Hispanic Blacks and Hispanics choose to be sedentary instead of exercising during their down time, while non-Hispanic White adults choose to be more physically active. There are also differences between ideal body weights among different racial groups. For example, non-Hispanic Black women and Hispanics tend to have a larger body shape than non-Hispanic White women. Even with a smaller body, non-Hispanic White women are dissatisfied more with their weight than non-Hispanic Black women. Also, non-Hispanic Black men have said they prefer bigger women. And lastly, there are socio-economic inequalities, like having a safe place to exercise and having healthy foods available. There is evidence to show that

neighborhoods with a large minority population, especially where there is <https://assignbuster.com/obesity-epidemics-related-to-raciaethnic-differences/>

low income, have fewer grocery stores where the healthy foods are affordable. There actually tends to be a lot more liquor stores and convenience stores. There is also proof to back up the impression that minority and low income groups live in communities that lack fitness centers, parks or playgrounds and where they do not go walking or running out of fear for personal safety.

In addition, people who live in a town with a high population of non-Hispanic Blacks or Hispanics have had a significantly higher body mass index and have a greater chance of being overweight or obese. On the other hand, individuals who live in a community with a high population of non-Hispanic Asians have on average a lower body mass index and were less likely to be overweight or obese. When examining body mass index and obesity, these results obviously illustrate the importance of the race/ethnicity of an individual and community composition.

Overall, obesity is a multifactorial disease that is influenced by the race/ethnicity of the individual and the environment. Just like previous studies have shown, Kirby and colleagues' obesity study illustrated that non-Hispanic Blacks had the highest obesity level, followed by Hispanics, then non-Hispanic Whites, and lastly non-Hispanic Asians. Also, the United States, in general, promotes bad eating habits that lead to obesity.

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