

*Are child-feeding practices in
Latinos contributing to obesity?*

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Overview

- Background and rationale for the study
- Research questions and methodology
- Relevance to food studies research

Rationale

We need to understand the underlying cultural, psychosocial, and environmental factors driving the behaviors associated with obesity before we can develop effective strategies to curtail them.

Overweight/obesity prevalence

- For adults:
 - 65% of adults were overweight or obese
 - Over 70% Mexicans were overweight or obese
- For children:
 - ~16% were overweight
 - 26.5% Mexican boys were overweight
 - 17% Mexican girls were overweight

Background

- Child-feeding practices (CFP):
 - Why do we want to look at them?
 - Modifiable
 - Early intervention
 - How do we measure CFP?
 - An evolving area
 - Is one feeding style better than another?
 - Indulgent style associated with higher child BMI

Background cont.

- What are toddlers eating?
 - Findings from Feeding Infants and Toddlers Study
 - Generally nutrients are adequate
 - Snacks have much room for improvement
 - FITS study comparing Hispanics to non-Hispanic toddlers
 - Greater % Energy from CHO
 - Lower % Energy from FAT
 - Greater % toddlers consume sweetened beverages

Research questions

PHASE 1:

- What kinds of child-feeding practices exist in Mexican mothers?

PHASE 2:

- How do child-feeding practices affect dietary intake of Mexican toddlers?
- How do child-feeding practices and dietary intake affect a toddler's risk for becoming overweight?

Qualitative research results

- PHASE 1: Child-feeding practices (CFP) deviate from recommendations:
 - Timing of solid food introduction is earlier
 - Strong tendency to cater to infant & toddler preferences & demands
 - Cultural beliefs and patterns affect CFP (timing, types & amounts of foods offered)
 - Major themes used in development of questionnaire

Research methods

- PHASE 2: 6-month longitudinal study
- Objective:
 - To study the effects of child-feeding practices on the dietary intake and rapid weight gain in Mexican toddlers
- Hypotheses:
 - Indulgent feeding practices will predict:
 - the types & amounts of foods consumed by the child
 - the child's rapid weight gain

Phase 2: Main outcomes

1. Dietary intake:

- % Energy from CHO, fat, protein
- % Energy from added sugar
- % Energy from certain types foods
- Ounces sweetened beverage & juice

2. Growth rate & Adiposity:

- Weight gain in 6-months
- Individual skinfolds
- Sum of SF (subscapular, suprailiac, triceps)

Phase 2: Data collection

Data collected at baseline & 6-month F/U*

1. Interviews

- Demographics & acculturation
- Structured questionnaire on child feeding practices

2. Anthropometrics

- Mother: Ht & wt
- Child: length, wt, skinfolds*

3. Diet records

- 2-day records for toddler intake*

Anticipated results

- Latino mothers with toddlers will commonly use Indulgent parenting practices
- Greater reliance on Indulgent parenting practices will be positively related to:
 - % energy from carbohydrate
 - % energy from certain types of food
 - % energy from added sugars
 - Ounces of fruit juice and sweetened beverages
 - Adiposity and weight gain

How might Food Studies address the obesity problem?

Future work may need to address questions such as:

- When does indulgent parenting increase the risk of obesity?
- Is marketing/media more effective on indulgent parents?
- Does past food deprivation in immigrant parents encourage indulgent behavior?
- Are there psychological or personality characteristics in Latinos that may play a role in obesity?