

Final Abstract/Summary

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Abstract:

Childhood obesity is a highly prevalent disease in the U.S. where roughly 17% of all American children are overweight/obese. Childhood obesity leads to harmful physical, mental and social consequences in the child's daily/future life. There are multiple determinants that factor in childhood obesity, with one being parental misperception. The purpose of this study is to measure the prevalence of obesity in children ages 3-5 years old attending childcare centers in Miami-Dade County and to specifically understand the correlation between childhood obesity and parental misperception. We will be recruiting participants from childcare centers (n=53) from different socioeconomic locations in Miami-Dade County. The parent participants will be asked to complete surveys, including questions on their demographics along with information on eating habits, parental and child weights, and parental perception of their children's weights. We will be measuring the children's body mass index after informed consent obtained from the parents. We hypothesize that the prevalence of childhood obesity has remained constant over recent years and that there is a correlation between parental misperception and childhood obesity. This study is of significance in the area of obesity prevention since recent data has been lacking on the prevalence of obesity in young children in the Miami-Dade county area. This project is innovative since the research addresses

parental perception with the inclusion of drawings representing the weight status of the children.

Executive summary:

In America, the prevalence of obesity is on the rise. One-third of adults and 17% of all American children are faced with obesity and its associated consequences (Ogden, Carroll, Kit, & Flegal, 2014). There are also significantly higher rates of severe obesity among children of lower socio-economic status, racial groups and ethnic minority groups: 9.5% of African-American girls and 10.6% Hispanic boys showed signs of severe obesity (Bass & Eneli, 2015). Obesity is a multifactorial disease that directly causes many chronic conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, arthritis, stroke and certain cancers (Childhood Obesity Facts, 2015). Childhood obesity is correlated with an increased likelihood of obesity in adolescence and can lead to problems later on in life.

Reports from previous studies indicate that parental misperception limits the help and willingness of the parent to implement changes in the child's behavior to countermeasure the obesity. Reports from previous studies in Hispanics indicate that the majority of parents with overweight/obese children perceive their children at a healthy weight (Foster & Hale, 2015). This may present a significant barrier for interventions in the prevention of obesity in young children. There has been an increase in prevalence of obesity over the past decades at younger ages making this a public health concern. Although studies have addressed Hispanic populations, the

findings cannot be necessarily applied to the ethnically diverse population living in Miami-Dade County. The current literature fails to address parental perception based on nationality/country of origin and immigrant status. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the role of parental perception of child's weight status on the prevalence of obesity in children. In this study we will be addressing the following question: Has the prevalence of childhood obesity increased, decreased or stayed the same over the last 3-5 years, and if/how parental misperception plays a detrimental role in childhood obesity. We hypothesize that that the prevalence of overweight/obese children has remained constant and that parental misperception is directly correlated to childhood obesity.