

Draft Abstract/Summary

Childhood obesity has become a national epidemic in the United States. Lower income Hispanics are facing the second highest childhood obesity rating in the country. The objective of this cross-sectional study is to determine how the cultural perceptions of Hispanic parents and caretakers can effect the overweight status of preschool aged children enrolled in lower income child centers located in Miami-Dade County. We will be recruiting Hispanic parents from 53 different childcare centers. The parent or caretaker will be asked to fill out a questionnaire. Questions will address factors associated with obesity in children, such as the food they feed their children, the number of hours of television their children watch, and the number of hours a day that they sleep. The questionnaire will also include several cultural questions such as ethnicity and country of origin. The questionnaires will also include a series of sketches of children. Parents will be asked to circle the picture that most closely resembles their child. The children's weight status will be determined from the children's heights and weights measured at the centers. This project is significant in the identification of cultural factors associated with parental perception of children's weight status in overweight Hispanic children in child care. Results of this study have significant implications in our society, particularly in the development of interventions to address cultural perceptions related to a child's weight status. Findings from this study may also shed light on the multifaceted nature of the obesity epidemic and the behavioral and cultural components that need to be taken into consideration by those in the medical field.