

Current and Classic Resources, January-March 2012

Current Resources

Flores G, Maldonado J, Durán P. Making tortillas without lard: Latino parents' perspectives on health eating, physical activity, and weight-management strategies for overweight Latino children. J. Acad Nutr Diet. 2012;112:81-89.

Aims: "The study aims, therefore, were to identify Latino parents' perspectives on healthy eating, physical activity, and weight-management strategies for overweight and obese Latino children, and examine the palatability and acceptability of, and obtain constructive feedback on, healthy, inexpensive substitutions for traditional Latino foods, with an ultimate goal of providing useful data for developing effective, evidence-based interventions for children, parents, and families that are likely to be adhered to."

Sample: Parents of overweight Latino children recruited from public schools in Latino neighborhoods of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Methodology: Qualitative studies using focus groups.

Results: "One particularly salient finding was that the parents of overweight Latino children have a fairly extensive knowledge of healthy and unhealthy nutritional and physical activity habits." Table 2 provides substantial attitudes, beliefs and practices on eating and physical activity strategies from focus groups including a variety of Latino cultural groups.

Discussion: Eliciting parents understanding of weight management strategies might be an effective way to guide collaborative and tailored approaches in weight management in children.

Krieger N, Dorling D, McCartney G. Mapping injustice, visualizing equity; why theory, metaphors and images matter in tackling inequalities. Public Health. 2012;126:256-258.

This article seeks to emphasize the importance of social epidemiology approaches to understanding health disparities. "To tackle health inequalities, it is important to challenge dominant biomedical and lifestyle theories with more comprehensive sociopolitical, psychosocial, and ecosocial alternatives."

It illustrates some key components of ecosocial theory including embodiment, pathways of embodiment, cumulative interplay of exposures, susceptibility and resistance, and accountability and agency. Embodiment implies including the social context into the biological determinants of health. The pathways of embodiment encourage the view that inequities exist in an ecosystem of social, political, and economic barriers. Cumulative interplay suggests the need to be aware of the interaction of biological, environmental and social factors over time. Accountability implies a social justice imperative to address research and application of evidence based practices to reduce health inequities and root causes. The article concludes with a call to "engage the broader public to make a difference in rectifying health inequities."

Classic Resources

Skloot R. The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks. New York, NY: Crown Publishers; 2010.

A fascinating story of the evolution of the first successful immortal cell line culture. The cells were taken from a patient named Henrietta Lacks, during treatment for cervical cancer at Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1951. The hospital was segregated at that time and Henrietta was treated in the "colored only" section of the hospital. While she signed a consent form for the procedure to insert radium pellets in her cervix (a general surgery consent form), she did not give permission to have a sample taken for experimentation in developing cell cultures.

The cell line not only survived but reproduced and is still alive today, some sixty years later. The cell line bore the name HeLa, using the first two initials of her first and last name, as was the custom at the time. They become a reliable source of "immortal" cells that were used worldwide. This included being used to develop the first polio vaccine, research in cancer and viral disease, and ultimately use in "in vitro" fertilization, cloning and gene mapping.

The patient never knew. Her family did not find out until about 20 years after Henrietta's death. This was Rebecca Skloot's first book and tells the story of how she sought to understand what happened and the effect it had on Henrietta's family. It is a tale of confusion and anger that is generated by experimentation without consent, magnified by the fact that the cells are still alive and generated millions of dollars income. It not only describes the personal heartaches of the family but the implications in the development of the bioethics of human research.

If you would like to contribute an annotated reference contact: [Timothy P. Hickman, MD, MEd, MPH](#) or [Fariha Shafi, MD](#)