

Abstract: 2020 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Showcase

The Perspectives of Black and Hispanic Families on Barriers and Strategies for Healthy Eating”

Speaker - Ms. Chishinga Callender (introduced by Mr. Joe Doty)

Abstract: Background: Diet-related disparities exist, and minority families with limited resources are at greatest risk. Diet-related disparities increase obesity and disease risks. The research question examined parent and child perspectives on healthy eating barriers, and strategies for healthy eating. Methods: This mixed-methods study (online survey, interviews, photographs) was framed within the Social Ecological Model. Parents/caregivers and 8-13 year olds (n=18 dyads) living in under-resourced Houston-area communities were recruited. During the interviews, participants answered questions about factors influencing eating behaviors; photographs taken by families guided the discussion. Interviews were digitally recorded, professionally transcribed, and double-coded using hybrid thematic analysis. Descriptive statistics were computed for demographic characteristics. Results: Parents were female (100%), 40-49 years old (61%), and minority (56% Black, 44% Hispanic) with an annual household income of \$21,000-\$41,000 (44%). Children were majority female (56%) and Black (56%). Interview findings revealed that limited access to and availability of healthy foods, convenience, cost, distance, and environment-related temptation were environmental barriers, while time, limited knowledge, and skills were personal barriers, and children’s and spouse’s food preferences were barriers to healthy eating choices for families. Mothers and children both identified food preparation techniques, food substitutions, fun food-related activities, and meal patterns/balanced meals as strategies for eating healthy. Mothers additionally reported using cost-saving methods (coupons, discounts) and creative strategies (disguising vegetables in meals). Conclusion: Understanding families’ perspectives about food barriers and strategies for healthy eating can provide direction on needed nutrition-related resources for families living in under-resourced communities.