

# African American and American Indian Parent Perspectives about Childhood Obesity



Daheia Barr-Anderson,  
PhD, MSPH

Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics  
Arnold School of Public Health  
University of South Carolina



Institute of Medicine

A Conversation about Parents and Childhood Obesity Prevention

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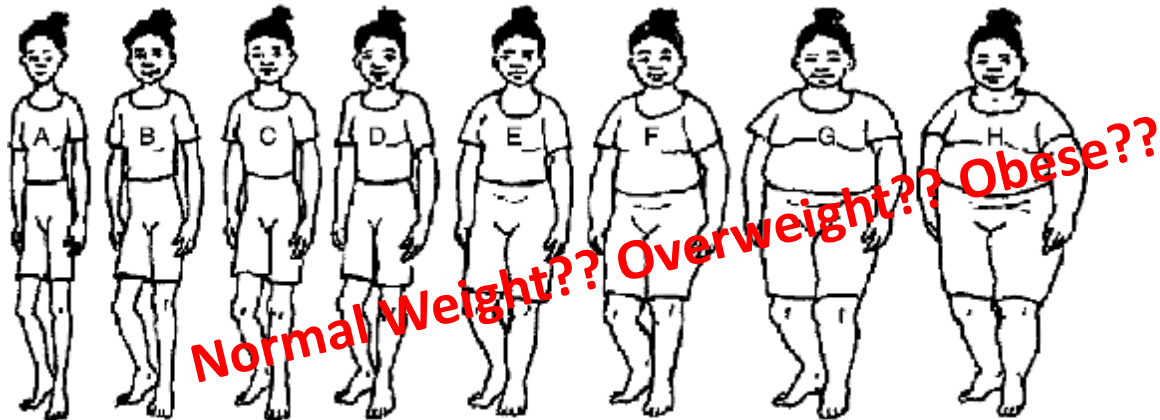
# AA & AI Cultures



What role does culture play?

# This Presentation

- What does obesity mean to parents?
- How do parents view their children's weight?
- What causes childhood obesity?
- What is the influential role of parents on childhood obesity?



# What Does Obesity Mean to You?

- *Obese, fat, and even overweight* are distasteful and potentially insulting
  - Prefer *big* or *heavy*
- Obese = major health problems and lack of normal functioning
  - Large body size  $\neq$  obese
- BMI percentiles are biased

# Is My Child Overweight?

- More likely to underestimate when:
  - Child and parent are overweight/obese
  - Child is younger
- Child will “grow out of” obesity or “grow into” their size
- *Chubby* toddler is cute; overweight adolescent is not

# What Causes Childhood Obesity?

- Lack of physical activity, too much sedentary activity, unhealthy eating
- Genetics
- Environmental factors
- Parental behavior
- Stress

# How Do I Influence My Child's Behavior?

- Physical Activity
  - Tangible and emotional support
  - Role modeling
- Eating
  - Limits on intake
  - Tangible support
  - Role modeling

# American Indian Parents

- More likely to underestimate child's weight status when:
  - Child and parents are overweight
  - Child is male
- Recognize potential relationships between diet, weight, and disease risk



# Future Directions

- More qualitative inquiry, especially with AI parents
- Frame future initiatives as improving health and not decreasing weight
- Early prevention
- Behaviorally-focused, family-based, culturally appropriate interventions with a focus on building practical skills
- Environmental changes so the healthy decision is the easiest decision



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# Thank you!

[dbarrand@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:dbarrand@mailbox.sc.edu)

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