

# How Data Science, AI, and Other Tech Approaches Can Help Address the Systems Leading to Obesity

**October 28th, 2021**

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# Acknowledgements/Disclosure

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- NICHD via U01HD086861
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- National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI)
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Laureus Sports for Good Foundation



Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute  
of Child Health and Human Development  
*Health research throughout the lifespan*



National Heart, Lung,  
and Blood Institute

BILL & MELINDA  
GATES *foundation*



# Meteorology vs. Obesity Prevention and Control

Forbes

Oct 12, 2016, 02:46pm EDT

## The One Thing To Do To Stop The Obesity Epidemic



Bruce Y. Lee Senior Contributor

Healthcare

I am a writer, journalist, professor, systems modeler, computational and digital health expert, avocado-eater, and entrepreneur, not always in that order.

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TIME

## How Our Health-Care System Is Feeding the Obesity Epidemic

BY BRUCE Y. LEE SEPTEMBER 23, 2016 10:01 AM EDT

Forbes

Dec 3, 2016, 12:25am EST

## Stephen Hawking Is Right But Also Wrong About Obesity



Bruce Y. Lee Senior Contributor

Healthcare

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Home - Public Policy - We need a whole systems approach to tackle obesity

We need a whole systems approach to tackle obesity



Forbes

## Obesity Epidemic Getting Worse, What Happens When You Don't Do Enough



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# Using only a single measure to determine the weather

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Now, over to AI for the weather.

Today, the temperature is going to be 90°, and tomorrow it will be 95°, on Saturday it will be 92° and on Sunday it will be 89° - and that's the weather! Back to you, Cindy.



# SOLUTION: Develop multiple, complex, and dynamic measures for obesity

Original Article  
EPIDEMIOLOGY/GENETICS

Obesity

## The Additional Costs and Health Effects of a Patient Having Overweight or Obesity: A Computational Model

Saeideh Fallah-Fini<sup>1,2</sup>, Atif Adam<sup>1</sup>, Lawrence J. Cheskin<sup>1</sup>, Sarah M. Bartsch<sup>1</sup>, and Bruce Y. Lee<sup>1</sup> 

**Objective:** This paper estimates specific additional disease outcomes and costs that could be prevented by helping a patient go from an obesity or overweight category to a normal weight category at different ages. This information could help physicians, other health care workers, patients, and third-party payers determine how to prioritize weight reduction.

**Methods:** A computational Markov model was developed that represented the BMI status, chronic health states, health outcomes, and associated costs (from various perspectives) for an adult at different age points throughout his or her lifetime.

**Results:** Incremental costs were calculated for adult patients with obesity or overweight (vs. normal weight) at different starting ages. For example, for a metabolically healthy 20-year-old, having obesity (vs. normal weight) added lifetime third-party payer costs averaging \$14,059 (95% range: \$13,956-\$14,163), productivity losses of \$14,141 (\$13,969-\$14,312), and total societal costs of \$28,020 (\$27,751-\$28,289); having overweight vs. normal weight added \$5,055 (\$4,967-\$5,144), \$5,358 (\$5,199-\$5,518), and \$10,365 (\$10,140-\$10,590). For a metabolically healthy 50-year-old, having obesity added \$15,925 (\$15,831-\$16,020), \$20,120 (\$19,887-\$20,352), and \$36,278 (\$35,977-\$36,579); having overweight added \$5,866 (\$5,779-\$5,953), \$10,205 (\$9,980-\$10,429), and \$16,169 (\$15,899-\$16,438).

**Conclusions:** Incremental lifetime costs of a patient with obesity or overweight (vs. normal weight) increased with the patient's age, peaked at age 50, and decreased with older ages. However, weight reduction even in older adults still yielded incremental cost savings.

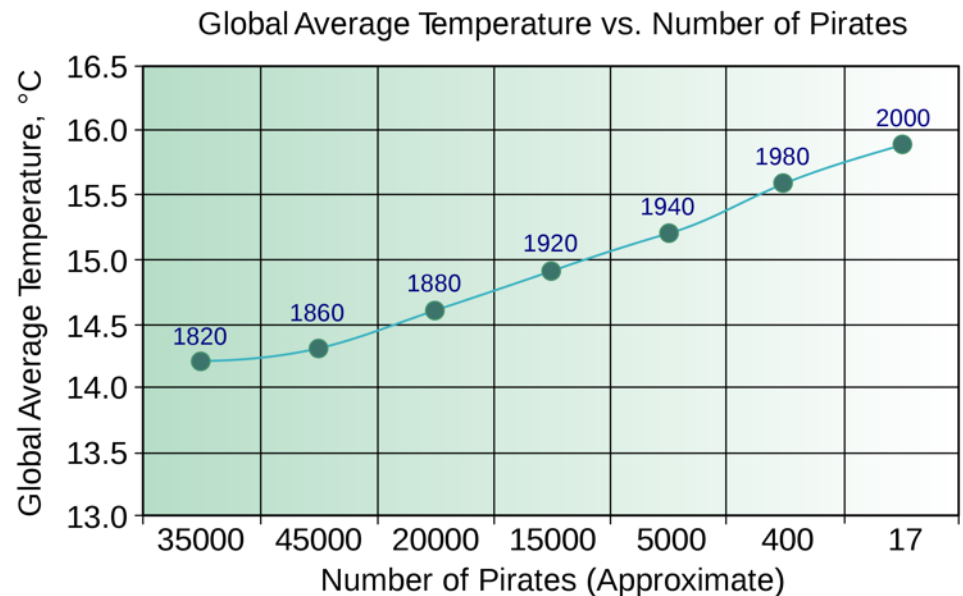
# Relying on simple associations and correlations for the weather

**Forbes**

## No, These Two Studies Don't Prove That Coffee Leads To Longer Life



**Bruce Y. Lee** Contributor  
Pharma & Healthcare



# SOLUTION: More systems approaches for obesity

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## TOP DOWN

Look for patterns and associations

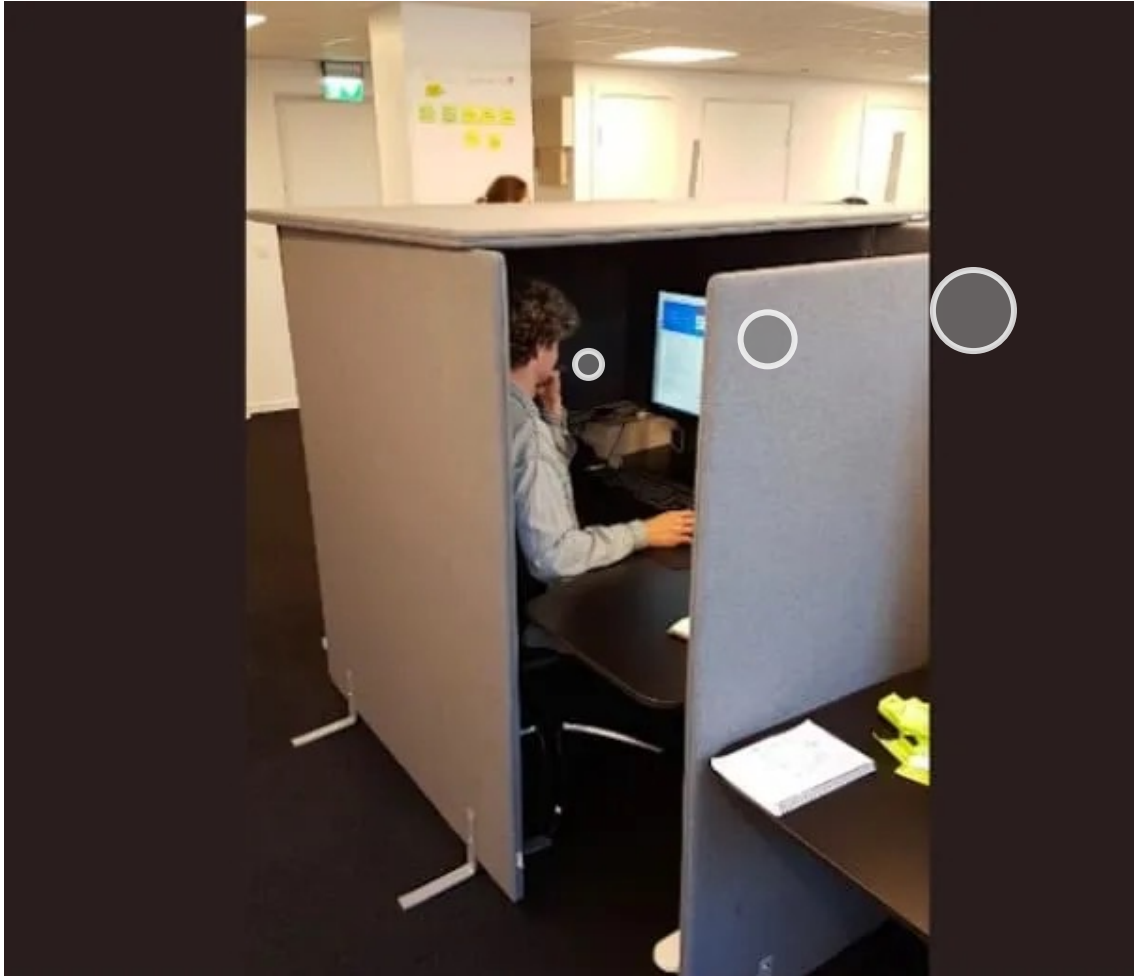


## BOTTOMS UP

Re-create the system and understand mechanisms



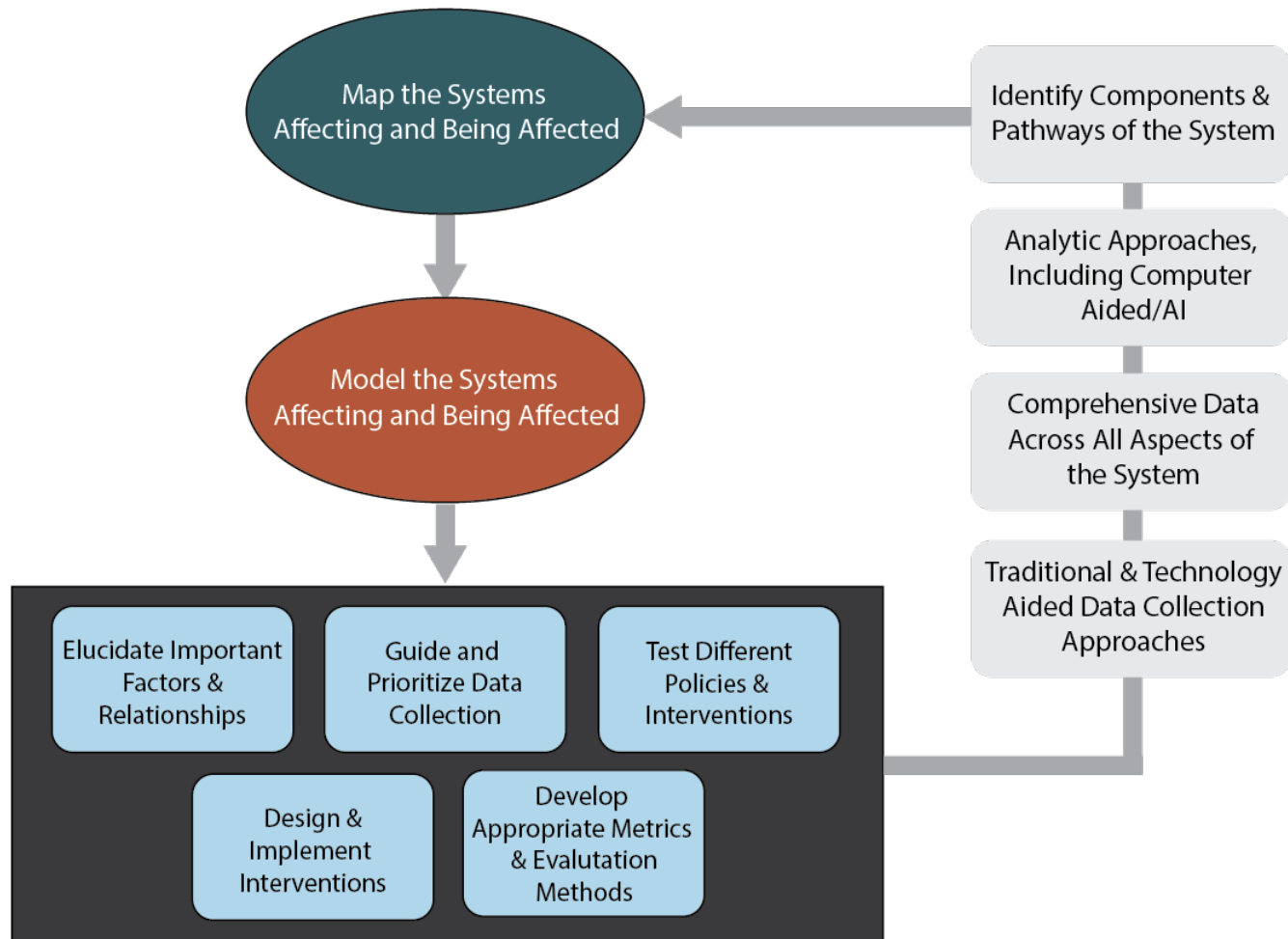
# Have data collection a separate and isolated activity



*Barometric  
pressure...MY  
PRECIOUS*



# SOLUTION: Integrate data collection, systems mapping and modeling, and policies and interventions

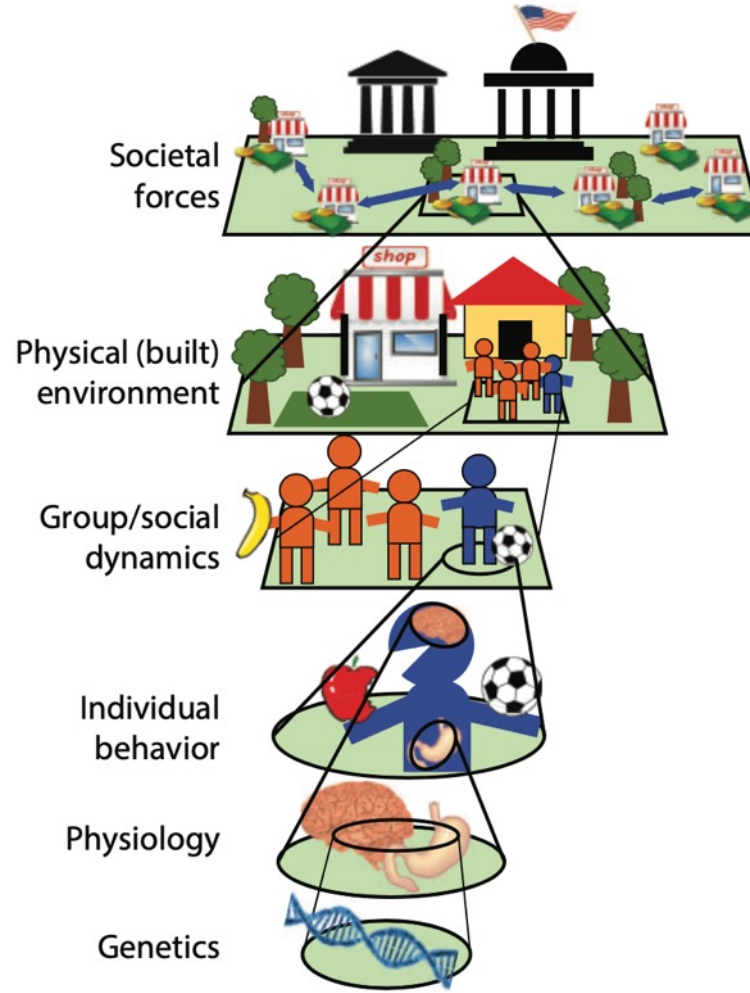


# Not readily sharing weather data

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# SOLUTION: More open data sharing



# Assuming that the weather in one location is the same everywhere else



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20VQuuqNvsc>

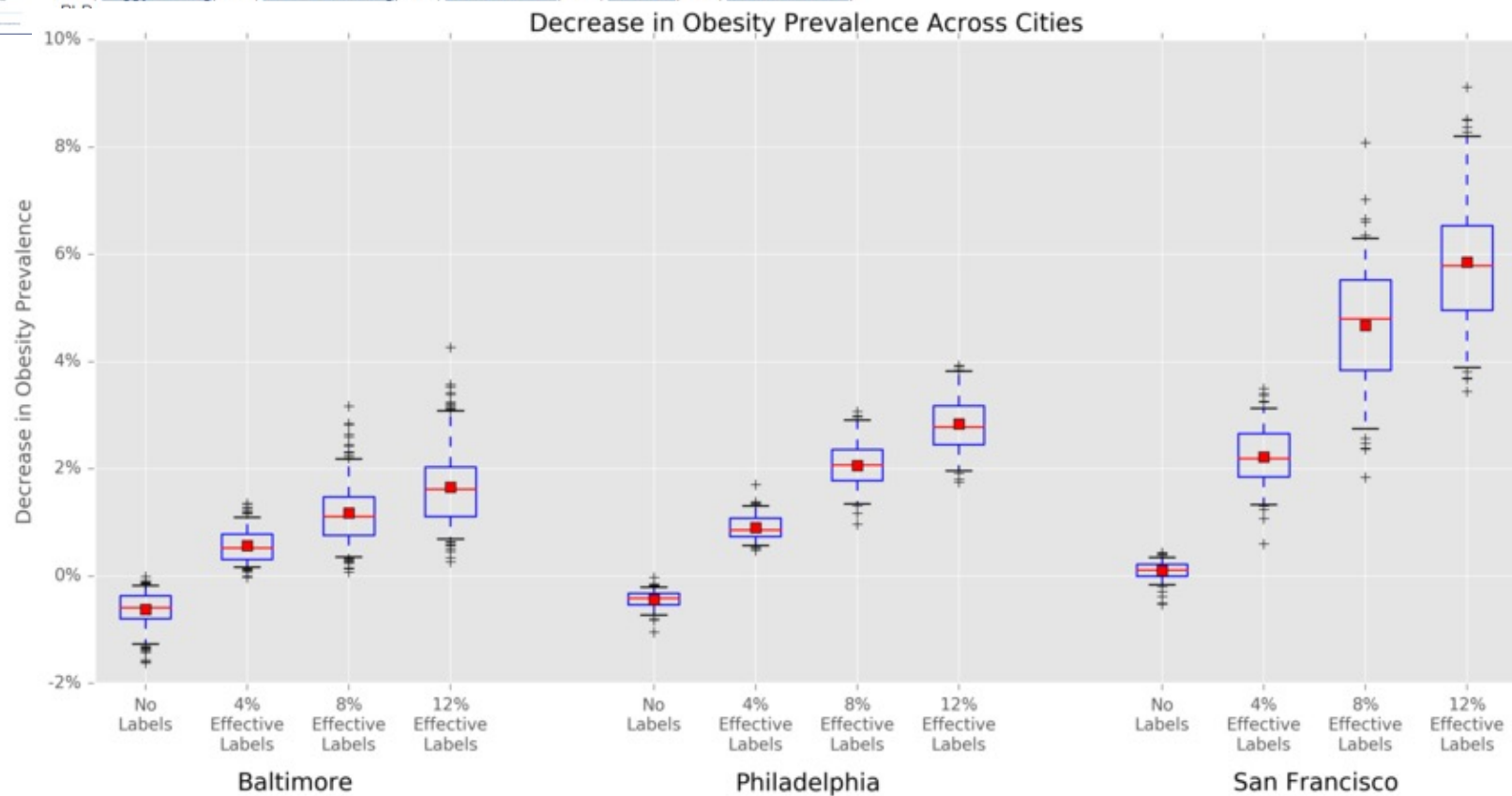


# SOLUTION: Consider the environment



## Simulating the Impact of Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Warning Labels in Three Cities

Bruce Y. Lee, MD, [Marie C. Ferguson, MSPH](#), [Daniel L. Hertenstein, BS](#), [Atif Adam, PhD](#), [Eli Zenkov, PhD](#), [Peggy I. Wang, PhD](#), [Michelle S. Wong, PhD](#), [Joel Gittelsohn, PhD](#), [Yeeli Mui, PhD](#), [Shawn T. Brown](#)



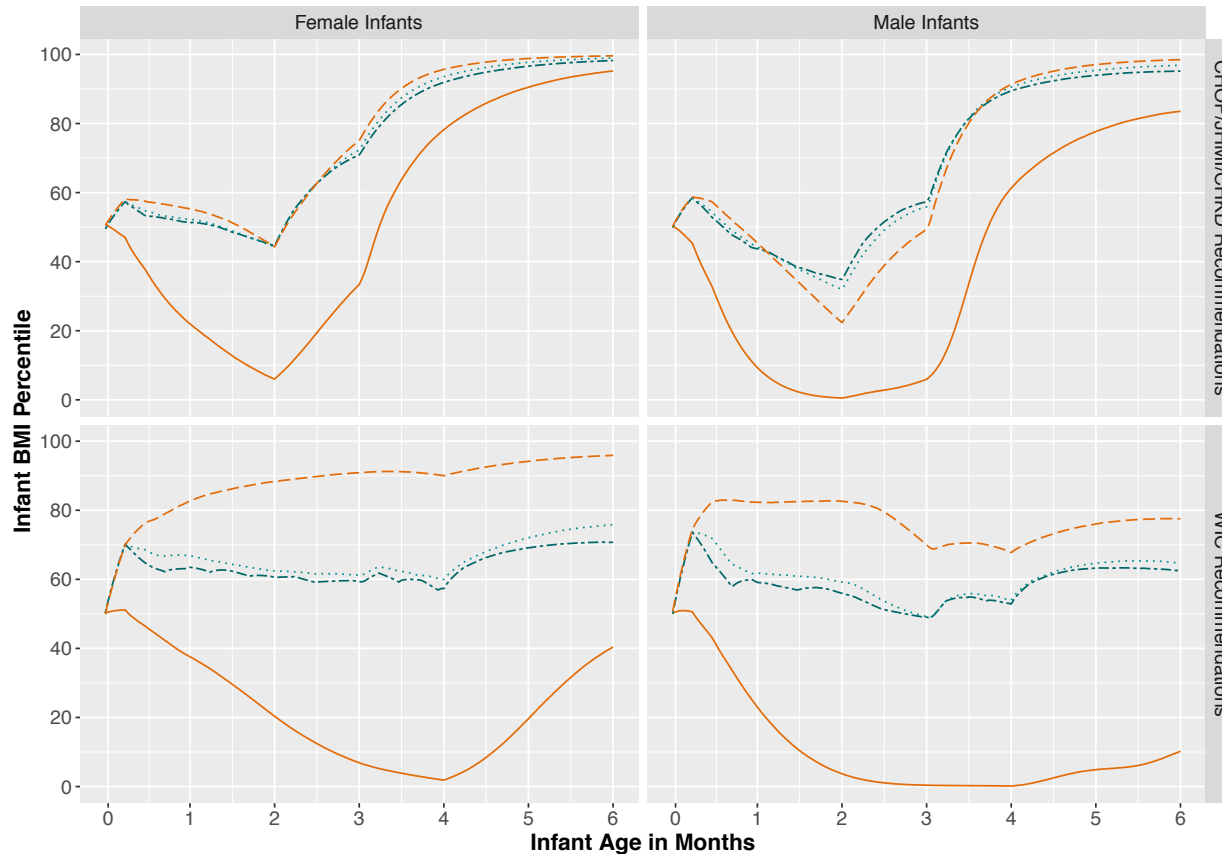
# Not factoring in time when it comes to the weather

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Photo credit: tomazl  
Website: Pexaby

# SOLUTION: Move toward more real time surveillance



**Pediatric  
RESEARCH**

How caregiver reacts when checking infants weight each week

- Adjust by quartile
- Adjust by half
- All lower quartile
- No feedback

Ferguson, et al. *Pediatric research*, 2020.

Note: Infant starting BMIs are normally distributed around the 50th percentile

# Blaming individuals for the weather

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Source: Social media meme



# SOLUTION: Factor in the surroundings such as social determinants



# Relying on single interventions to deal with the weather



Source: <https://9gag.com/gag/a1ZxNE2>

# SOLUTION: Multiple multiscale layered and integrated policies and interventions



Original Article

## Simulating the Impact of Crime on African American Women's Physical Activity and Obesity

Tiffany M. Powell-Wiley, Michelle S. Wong, Joel Adu-Brimpong, Shawn T. Brown,

Change in Overweight and Obesity Prevalence Over One Year

Percent of Accessible Physical Activity Locations

|                                  |        | 10%    | 50%     | 90%     |
|----------------------------------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| Baseline Probability to Exercise | 100%   | -6.84% | -18.36% | -22.58% |
|                                  | 50%    | -0.72% | -4.46%  | -5.87%  |
|                                  | 37.50% | 0.63%  | -2.35%  | -3.42%  |
|                                  | 25%    | 1.92%  | -0.05%  | -0.69%  |

Change in Obesity Prevalence Over One Year

Percent of Accessible Physical Activity Locations

|                                  |        | 10%    | 50%     | 90%     |
|----------------------------------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| Baseline Probability to Exercise | 100%   | -9.04% | -20.11% | -24.38% |
|                                  | 50%    | -0.77% | -6.70%  | -9.13%  |
|                                  | 37.50% | 1.05%  | -2.91%  | -4.46%  |
|                                  | 25%    | 2.94%  | 0.25%   | -0.79%  |



# Not using the latest technology and advances when addressing the weather

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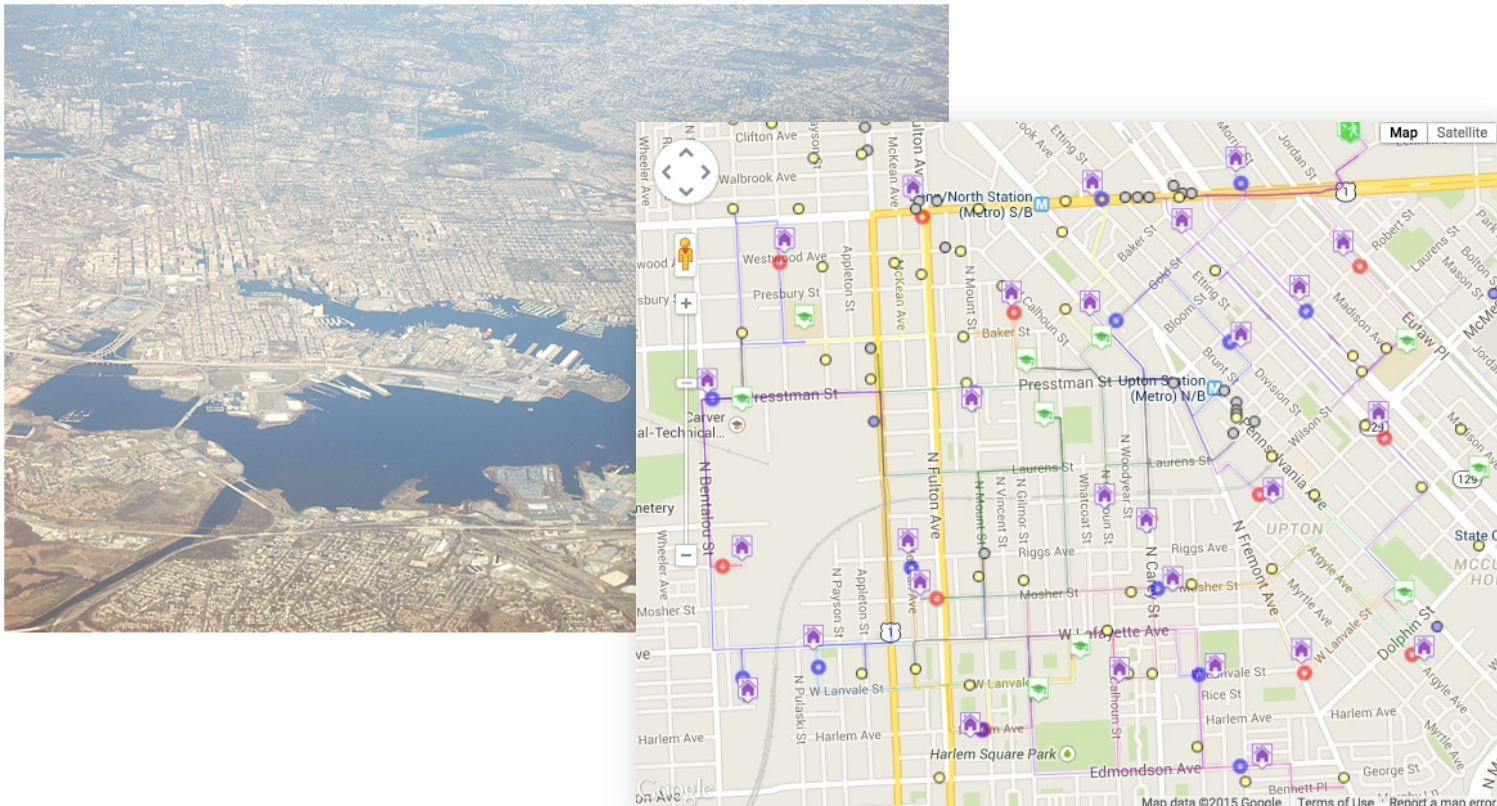
Source: Franklin Institute, Rachel D. Valletta, PhD  
<https://www.fi.edu/blog/groundhog-day-science>

# SOLUTION: Incorporate the latest technology and computational approaches

## NUTRITION REVIEWS

### A systems approach to obesity

Bruce Y. Lee, Sarah M. Bartsch, Yeeli Mui, Leila A. Haidari, Marie L. Spiker, Joel Gittelsohn





# Claiming that the weather is too simple or too complex

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# SOLUTION: Perfect is the enemy of good, need to start somewhere



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**Atif Adam** is a senior analyst at the Global Obesity Prevention Center.

## CHILDREN'S HEALTH

By Bruce Y. Lee, Atif Adam, Eli Zenkov, Daniel Hertenstein, Marie C. Ferguson, Peggy I. Wang, Michelle S. Wong, Patrick Wedlock, Sindiso Nyathi, Joel Gittelsohn, Saeideh Falah-Fini, Sarah M. Bartsch, Lawrence J. Cheskin, and Shawn T. Brown

# Modeling The Economic And Health Impact Of Increasing Children's Physical Activity In The United States

**ABSTRACT** Increasing physical activity among children is a potentially important public health intervention. Quantifying the economic and health effects of the intervention would help decision makers understand its impact and priority. Using a computational simulation model that we developed to represent all US children ages 8–11 years, we estimated that maintaining the current physical activity levels (only 31.9 percent of children get twenty-five minutes of high-calorie-burning physical activity three times a week) would result each year in a net present value of \$1.1 trillion in direct medical costs and \$1.7 trillion in lost productivity



# Increasing physical activity amongst children can save billions and billions of dollars

## The New York Times

WELL | MOVE

### Child's Play Is Good for All of Us

Phys Ed

By GRETCHEN REYNOLDS MAY 3, 2017



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**Overweight kids are costing America billions**

USA TODAY NETWORK Sean Rossman, USA TODAY Published 4:00 p.m. ET May 1, 2017 | Updated 9:26 a.m. ET May 2, 2017

Overweight children are costing America billions according to a new study from Johns Hopkins University. Sean Dowling (@seandowlingtv) has more. Buzz60



# Summary

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- Develop multiple, complex, and dynamic measures for obesity
- More systems approaches for obesity
- Integrate data collection, systems mapping and modeling, and policies and interventions
- More open data sharing
- Consider the environment
- Move toward more real time surveillance
- Factor in the surroundings such as social determinants
- Multiple multiscale layered and integrated policies and interventions
- Incorporate the latest technology and computational approaches
- Perfect is the enemy of good, need to start somewhere

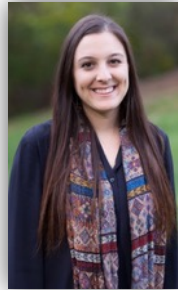


# PHICOR Team

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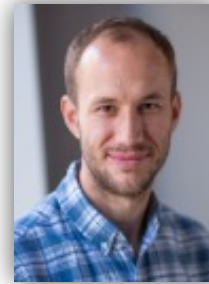
Kelly O'Shea, BSFS



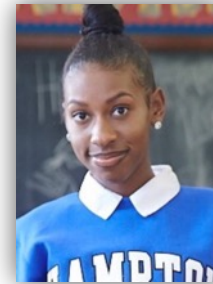
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Healthcare

**Forbes**