

A Sociological Framework for the Study of Childhood Obesity

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Obese Baby?



Environmental Risk Factors in Childhood Obesity: A Social Ecological Approach

- To derive an evidence-based model that deconstructs the link between social, cultural and environmental triggers and childhood obesity
- Mixed-methods
- Multidisciplinary

Straughan, Chong Yap Seng, Joanne Yoong

Deconstructing the Research Question

- Obesity as a social construct

→ *What is childhood obesity?*

→ *What is obesity?*

→ BMI guidelines in adults

A Grounded Theory Approach

- 30 respondents over 7 focus groups
- What constitutes a “healthy” child:
 - ✓ physically active
 - ✓ not prone to sickness
 - ✓ happy
- ❖ Fat babies as “cute”

Generational Differences in Perceptions

- Younger parents strive for an ideal growth rate of 50th to 75th percentile
- Older parents have less acute sense of what is appropriate

“ ... for grandparents, they would prefer to see the child at a very high (percentile), at the 75th or the 95th percentile.//Let's say my child falls below the 50th percentile, then my mother or my mother-in-law will question, are you sure you are giving him enough good? Why is he not growing?” *Chinese, Female, 30s*

Trusted Sources of Information



Trusted Sources of Information

“Triangulation. Because of social media and online media, we can follow the news source. It’s up to us who we want to follow, and what’s being pushed...We do know that certain media do not give a balance, so we will read the same news, but from a few sources. I think we have to do this balance? We cannot believe all of TheOnlineCitizen, we cannot believe all of Straits Times. We need to look at all and triangulate.”

– 50s, Female, Chinese, Masters

Themes

Social Determinants

- Education
- Ethnicity
- Age
- Housing type
- Income

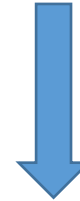
- I. **Family**
 - Ideology
 - Practice
- II. **Informal/Social Support**
(Influence of Others)
- III. **Sources of Information**
- IV. **Trust**



Health & Well-Being

Lifestyle

Attitudes



Social construction of a healthy child

Knowledge

Practice

Unintended Consequences

- Lessons from the TAF Club
- Rise of eating disorders among

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/whats-eating-the-young-ones>

SGH Eating Disorders Program

Increase in young patients under 21 years

KKH – eating disorders among primary school children

Using AI to Empower

- Plug knowledge gap
- Empower individuals to effectively monitor nutrition intake and physical activity
- ***Fitbit + mood tracker + nutritionist-on-call***