UCLA Undergraduate
RESEARCH WEEK

Review on Global Trends and Risks for Childhood Obesity

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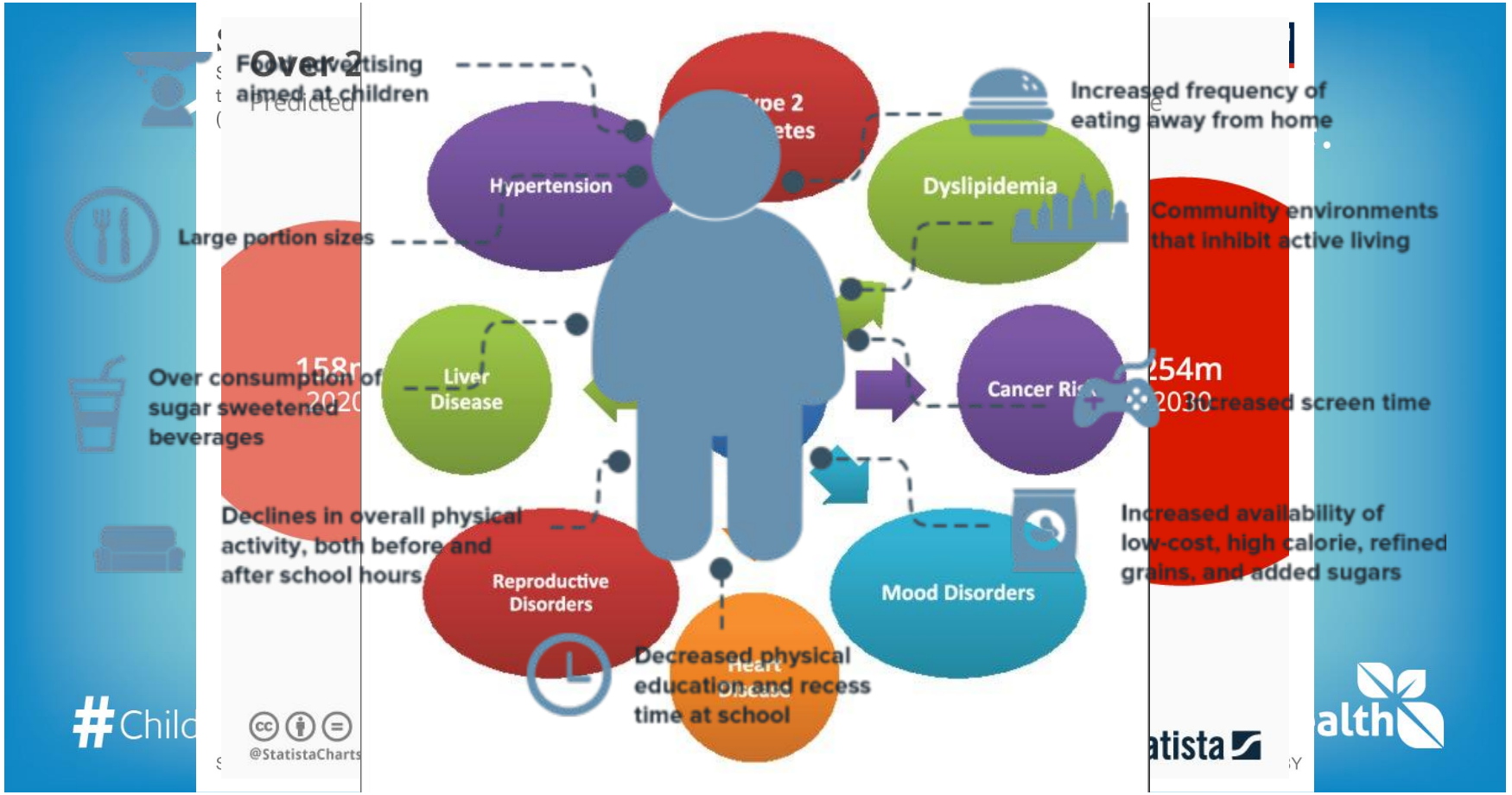
Introduction



Introduction - Purpose

- Recognition of childhood obesity as a significant health issue
- Focus on epidemiology and primary causes
- Compare childhood obesity in US and other countries
  - Examine specific trends in US compared to global trends
- Find correlates of childhood obesity
  - Macro level correlates/moderators

Methods

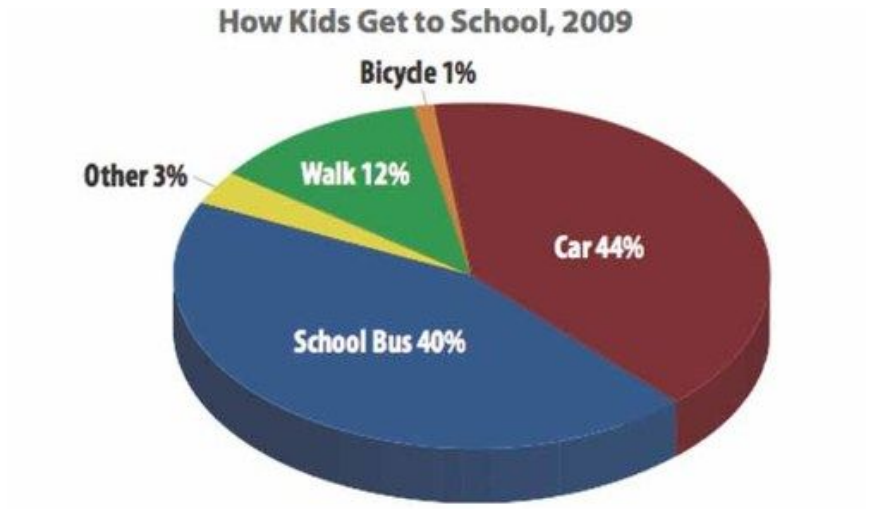
- A scientific literature review was conducted
- Key search terms were identified and then used to gather articles through online databases
- Articles were synthesized by drawing connections between the data, states, environments, and policies of different countries

Results

- Cross sectional study in Japan found relationship between frequency of home cooking and childhood obesity
  - Other studies found home cooking to be associated with higher vegetable consumption amongst children
- Lower SES neighborhoods in the US are particularly vulnerable, less access to healthy affordable options

Results

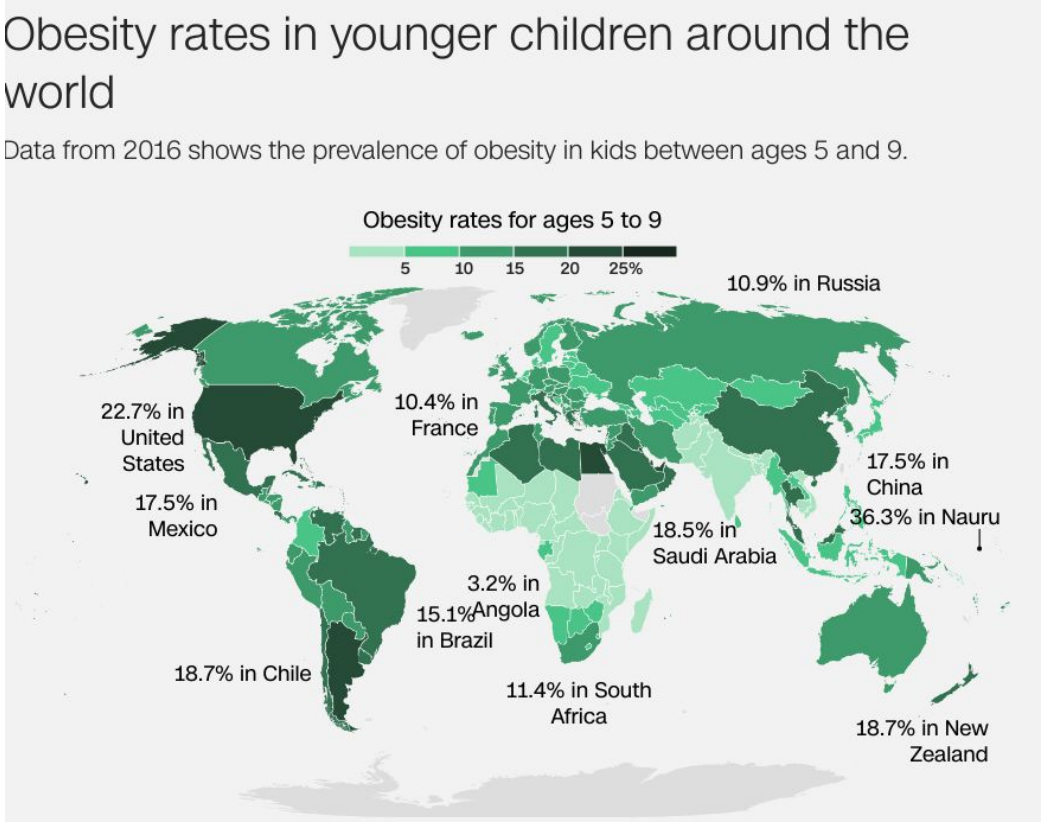
- In Mexico, childhood obesity was lower in rural areas, less movement by public transport
- Less physical activity in New York and London has been linked to fewer recreational areas, fears of crime, and heavy traffic in poor neighborhoods



Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration Office of Policy, National Household Travel Survey, 2009.

Results

Source: CNN



- Pacific Islands have highest obesity rates among children (ages 5-19)
- Cultural differences: “Obese” is not universal, obesity is measured on different scales
- Processed food in place of traditional food contributed to high obesity rates in the Pacific Islands

Conclusions

- By comparing international data, the effects of nutrition and physical activity on childhood obesity are made clear
- However, it is also important to be cognizant of the fact that not everyone can make simple lifestyle changes, there are larger structural factors at play
- Oftentimes it is low SES groups that are most impacted
- To address this countries should work with impacted groups to develop policies like increasing access to supermarkets and recreational areas or adding biking lanes and safe walking routes
- To address childhood obesity, it will be important to focus on the nutrition and physical activity of impacted groups by providing accessible and available solutions

Acknowledgements/Works Cited

Acknowledgements:

- Community Medicine in Los Angeles

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