



ACR 2004 Doctoral Consortium

Advertising and Vulnerable Populations

Childhood Obesity and *Positive*
Ad-Based Campaigns



Childhood Obesity

- Prevalence of the Problem
- Potential Causes and Outcomes
- Current *Positive* Ad-Based Campaigns
- Some Research Issues
- Some Research Challenges



Prevalence

- Prevalence of the Problem
 - 16% of U.S. kids (6-19 yrs) are ***overweight/obese***; another 31% are ***at risk for becoming overweight/obese*** – 47% total.
 - More prevalent among African Americans (AA) and Mexican Americans (MA) than Whites (W).
 - From 1986-2000, a 50% increase for W; a 120% increase for AA and MA
 - Slightly more prevalent in boys than girls.
- ***Sources: Hedley et al. JAMA 2004***
Strauss & Pollack JAMA 2001



Potential Causes

- Likely Strong Potential Causes:
 - Parental influences: genetic and socialization.
 - Socio-economic/environmental factors: poverty, child neglect, low cognitive stimulation.
 - Poor exercise and diet habits.
- Unlikely *Strong* Potential Causes?
 - TV viewing and/or Food Advertising
 - Cross-sectional data show a consistent weak correlation; experimental studies show somewhat stronger effects.
- **Sources:** Ashton 2004 *J. Royal Soc. Med*; Robinson et al. 1999 *JAMA*; Ebbeling et al. 2002 *Lancet*



Potential Outcomes

- Personal Outcomes:
 - Lower physical health (more common in AA/MA)
 - Lower psycho-social health (more common in W, and W girls in particular)
 - 70% of obese children become obese adults
- Health costs:
 - \$35 mill from 1979-1981 - .43% of total
 - \$127 mill from 1997-1999 – 1.70% of total
- *Sources: Jonides et al. Pediatrics 2002; Schwimmer et al. JAMA 2003; Wang & Dietz 2002 Pediatrics; Ebbeling et al. 2002 Lancet*



Positive Ad-based Campaigns

- NOW – prevention strategies are focusing on the ***positive effects*** of nutrition advertising and promotion of physical activity.
 - NIH – The Advertising Council partnership Campaign for Healthy Lifestyles & Disease Prevention (2004)
 - CDCs National Youth Media Campaign to Promote Healthy Activity - VERB (2002)
- Both take (in general) a two-prong approach with ads/PSAs directed at children and parents.



Positive Ad-based Campaigns

- NIH–The Advertising Council Campaign Research:
 - Research toward preventing obesity through lifestyle modification (diet and exercise).
 - Cross-cutting research topics, including promotional campaigns, technology, and education/outreach efforts.
 - Research on special populations at high risk for obesity including children and ethnic minorities.
 - Research on motivational/situational factors affecting obesity in children.
- *Source: <http://www.obesityresearch.nih.gov>*



Positive Ad-based Campaigns

- CDCs National Youth Media Campaign to Promote Healthy Activity - VERB (2002):
 - Mission: To increase and maintain physical activity/exercise among tweens (9-13 yr olds).
 - Research: The effectiveness of ads, promotions, WEB, public relations, and community outreach for promoting exercise.
- CDC Feb 17 2004 press release shows evidence that VERB had positive effects on self-report exercise.
- *Source:* <http://www.cdc.gov/youthcampaign/research>



Research Issues

- *Other entities* likely affect weight loss in obese children: parental influence, school interventions, and community outreach programs
 - Do campaigns contribute above/beyond (when controlling) for *other entities*? Any sustained LT effects?
 - Do ad campaigns interact (moderate) with *other entities* to strengthen potential positive effects?
 - If so, which interaction effects are stronger? Parental? School? Outreach?
 - Are effects listed above different for higher at risk groups (AA and MA, Boys vs. Girls)?



Research Issues

- CDC model / some NIH research Qs are based in Social Learning/Self Efficacy Theories (Bandura 1986); HLC and TPB theories (Izen 1991).
 - How much exposure/what message types affect beliefs, SN, and self efficacy? Should ads stress PBC barriers?
 - Do parental-targeted ads crossover to affect child-targeted ads and DVs (and vice versa)? Are ads targeted both at child and parent more effective?
 - Do prior attempts with behaviors (with and w/o success) have effects that interact with ad campaign?
 - Could adverse effects occur as found in anti-drug/anti-drinking campaigns? What types of themes might produce them? (Pechmann and Slater 2004).



Research Challenges

- What should be measured?
 - Self-report (SR) attitude/intent are common – design studies such that LT benefits-based DVs (sustained weight loss; cardiovascular fitness; over-time depression) are measured.
 - Self-report exposure to ads is common – design studies such that SR and GRP can be gathered for convergence.
- Getting involved:
 - To do research - such that it contributes - requires access to subjects and data. Cooperation of parents, school, health officials, ad agencies, etc. is needed.
 - Long-haul research – takes time to write grants, obtain funding, get cooperation from others. Given LT benefits as DVs, time spanning/longitudinal studies needed.