

Overeating: What Does It Mean To African American Female Caretakers?

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Overview

The prevalence of obesity and diabetes is disproportionately higher for African American females compared to women of other ethnic groups; placing them at higher cardiovascular disease risk.

There are environmental, social and economic factors that negatively impact the cardiovascular disease risk of African American adult females including healthcare and food access, lower income and parental caretaker demands.

Parenting demands can increase stress and result in lower performance of cardioprotective behaviors.

Eating regulation, specifically overeating, is investigated as a cardiovascular disease risk factor in the general US population, however; there is a dearth of research that examines the role of overeating in cardiovascular disease risk in African Americans.

African American adult females may have a unique cardiovascular disease risk as a result of parental caretaker demands and overeating.

Objectives

To assess African American adult female caretakers' definition of overeating.

Methods

Participants were identified as 1) female, 2) African American, 3) primary caretaker, 4) age 18-45 years, and 5) residence in NC.

Participants were recruited from a local university's electronic listserv which included African American students and staff members.

Participants completed eligibility and demographic questionnaires.

Qualitative data were collected on overeating and the contexts that support it through interviews. Data were collected from May until June 2020.

Data were transcribed and manually coded using a codebook.

Results

Preliminary Themes & Quotes

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| Barriers to Healthy Eating | Especially when I was working in the office setting, ... then I forget about healthy. I just want convenience. ... , so I go to the fast food. |
| Autonomy | If I did not go and actually do the research myself or get my degree in exercise, I don't think I'd be eating the way I'm now... |
| Competence | I will definitely say when I am on my cycle... .I'm not really hungry. It's just that I'm craving something sweet... . I do find in those moments I do think that's overeating. |
| Cultural Influence | It's a part of our culture. ... just black people but also my familial culture we celebrate by eating. |
| Behavior and Environments | I just made a few changes in my diet and lifestyle maybe like two weeks ago. So cutting back on a lot of carbs,...I started running four miles a day. |
| Emotions | ...overeating of kinda like shame and guilt like 'why did you just let yourself do that?' sometimes it's just if I just give my body what it's asking for. |
| Relationships | My kids. . . . Just having the energy to take care of them, do school and work. |
| Behavioral Capacity | When I do make it because anything outside of that I tend to get frustrated, ...I tend to get frustrated so I don't want to cook. |
| COVID-19 Related Eating Behaviors | Now with being at home, I find myself snacking, especially at night. I find myself snacking a lot. |



Highlights

Participants (n=8) were University staff member and student African American female caretakers with an average age of 33.3 years.

Overeating concepts ranged from weight status to satiety signals and included terms such as 'stuffed' and 'disordered eating.'

High-energy, carbohydrate-rich foods were preferred when overeating occurred.

Overeating events occurred in social settings over 50% of the time.

Conclusions

The eating behaviors and dietary choices of some African American adult female caretakers are influenced by a variety of factors including culture, emotion and family.

There is no standard definition of overeating for this population; suggesting that context is necessary to identify and understand it.

A larger sample size will be helpful in making more definitive statements about the role overeating plays in cardiovascular disease risk for African American adult female caretakers.