

Health

CONTRADICTING EARLIER RESEARCH, NEW STUDY FINDS BLACK CHILDREN AND POOR CHILDREN FAR MORE LIKELY THAN OTHERS TO BE OVERWEIGHT

Poor children are nearly three times as likely to be over-weight as children of middle-class and affluent families, according to an analysis of a nationally representative sample of 6,700 youngsters aged 5 to 17.

Black children, the research also finds, are more than three times as likely as white children to be overweight, which is defined as 30% or more above the normal ratio of weight to height for a given age.

According to the new study, 14.4% of poor children are overweight, compared to 5.2% of children from families with incomes at least twice the poverty level, a group that includes about 60 percent of American children. About 17.3% of black youngsters are overweight compared to 5.3% of whites.

The combined effect of race and poverty is even more dramatic: 21.9% of black children living in poverty are overweight compared to 4.5% of middle-class and affluent white youngsters.

The findings — which appear in the winter issue of the *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, published by Meharry Medical College — derive from the 1987 National Medical Care Expenditure Survey, the most recent nationally representative sampling of health care use and expenditures. Prepared by Dr. Llewellyn J. Cornelius, of the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the paper in the Meharry journal represents the first publication of the survey's results relating to the health habits of children.

The results are in distinct contrast to those of an earlier federal survey, the Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (HANES), conducted between 1976 to 1980. An analysis of that survey by a group from Harvard University found obesity to be considerably more prevalent among white children than among black children. While that analysis employed a different method of measuring obesity than the new research

does, Dr. Cornelius is doubtful that this could account for the wide variance between the two surveys. The measure, he points out, have been shown to be highly correlated.

Notes Dr. Cornelius: "When the Harvard group compared data from HANES to results of a similar survey conducted from 1963 to 1965, they found that the prevalence of obesity had increased at almost twice the

speed among black children as among white children. Now we have moved ahead another decade to 1987. What these new figures suggest is that, when it comes to being overweight, black kids have caught up with and passed white kids. We know that black adults are more likely to be obese than white adults; now we're seeing a similar pattern in children."

Analyzing data from the na-

tionally representative survey of 15,000 households, Dr. Cornelius' study compares the impact of age, gender, race, and parental income and education of four factors related to the health of school-aged children — weight, eating breakfast, wearing seat belts, and hours of sleep per night. Blacks constitute about 16% of the children's sample and Hispanics about 10%.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD SLATES LARGEST FUNDRAISING EVENT

Planned Parenthood of Southern Nevada marks its 12th Annual Wine Celebration Sunday, March 15th.

The Union Plaza Hotel and Casino will host the event in the Triple Crown Ballroom from 2-6 P.M.

For those who are not familiar with the Wine Celebration, there will be fine wines from all across America to sample, hors d'oeuvres, and live entertainment. Both a Live Wine Auction

and a Silent Auction will be held. The Live Wine Auctions will be conducted at 3:30 and 4:45 by Executives Chef, Les Kincaid, a nationally recognized food and wine consultant.

All proceeds from the Wine Celebration will go to Planned Parenthood of Southern Nevada, Inc. who provides low cost reproductive health care, educational programs and counseling services to women in Southern Nevada.

Tickets are available through all Ticket Master locations, Bun on the Run Deli / Caterers, located at 1771 E. Flamingo Ste. 107B, and at Planned Parenthood administrative offices located at 3220 W. Charleston Blvd.

Tickets are \$20 per person if purchased prior to the event and \$25 per person at the door.

For additional information, contact Planned Parenthood of Southern Nevada at 878-3622.

VIEW FROM HHS

by Louis W. Sullivan, M.D.



Black History Month is more than an annual observance when we learn about the great contributions that outstanding persons of African descent have made which benefit the world. One of the expectations of the observance is that its focus on historical individual and group achievements will inspire others to greater efforts.

Hopefully, we will not stop at further educating ourselves about the great achievements of internationally respected figures such as George Washington Carver and Dr. Charles Drew. The observance should compel us to consider the important contribution each of us can make to the betterment of ourselves, our community, our nation and the world through more responsible actions every day of our lives.

All around us, every single day, the world benefits from the inventions, discoveries and other leadership breakthroughs of Black Americans. To name a few of the patent recipients:

Granville T. Woods, the electric railway system, automatic safety cut-out for electric circuit, the automatic air brake and railway telegraphy; *Frederick M. Jones*, thermostat and temperature control system, truck/railway car refrigeration, and the ticket dispensing machine; *Garrett Augustus Morgan*, automatic traffic signal and the gas mask; *Jan E. Matzeliger*, automatic shoe making machine; and *T. J. Marshall*, the fire extinguisher;

Also, *J. Standard*, a refrigerator and oil stove; *Lewis H. Latimer*, co-developer of the electric light bulb; *R. B. Spikes*, the transmission and its shifting process; *G. F. Grant*, the golf tee; *William B. Purvis*, the hand stamp; and *Andrew J. Beard*, the "Jenny Coupler" that's still used in connecting railroad cars.

It is obvious how profoundly these Black patent recipients have affected our lives. And there are many more of them.

But it's not just spectacular discoveries that bring about dramatic turnabouts and improvements in the quality of life that we and future generations will enjoy.

Black Americans still disproportionately suffer crippling burdens in many educational, health and life-threatening situations. We can all help to dramatically improve this tragic situation by avoiding at-risk conduct, and by supporting one another in positive choices for our health and our lives.

As much as for taking note of great individual achievements, Black History Month also is a time to appreciate the tremendous group advancements being made and how much better we could do simply by changing some negatives.

Historians would rate our group actions right alongside other dramatic turnabouts and achievements if by next February we lowered school dropout rates, cut unwed teen-age pregnancies, curbed the use of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs, reduced homicides, got more people exercising and paid more attention to what we eat.

Sound like a pipe dream? That's what some skeptics once said about ideas that became history-making inventions. Actually, if every man, woman and child among us did his or her part, we would get it done.

Then, during Black History Month next year, we could celebrate one of our most spectacular group achievements ever.

(Dr. Sullivan is U.S. secretary of health and human services.)

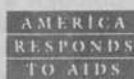
If You're Dabbling In Drugs...
You Could Be Dabbling
With Your Life.



This is a message from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

Skin popping, on occasion, seems a lot safer than mainlining. Right? You ask yourself: What can happen? Well, a lot can happen. That's because there's a new game in town. It's called AIDS. So far there are no winners. If you share needles, you're at risk. All it takes is one exposure to the AIDS virus and you've just dabbled your life away.

For more information about AIDS, call 1-800-842-AIDS. Nevada AIDS Hotline



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