

African American Collaborative  
Obesity Research Network

**Addressing Obesity in African American Communities: Expanding the Paradigm**

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www.aacorn.org

## Overview

Audio will start with the next slide

- **Context**
- **Expanded causal paradigm**
- **AACORN's expanded paradigm**
- **Follow up**
  - Linking AACORN's paradigm to broader community issues
  - Linking AACORN's paradigm to mainstream obesity research
  - Using paradigm to drive research design and implementation

### In the News: U.S. Population Is Now One-Third Minority

- (May 2006) New U.S. Census Bureau estimates for 2005 show that 98 million people in the United States —about 33 percent of the total U.S. population of 296.4 million—are part of a racial or ethnic minority group. In addition, 45 percent of children under age 5 are minorities.

Population reference bureau www.prb.org

### % of U.S. Non-Hispanic Black Men And Women Above Overweight And Obesity Cutoffs: 1999-2002

	Men			Women		
	BMI 25 +	BMI 30 +	BMI 40 +	BMI 25 +	BMI 30 +	BMI 40 +
20 y +	62.9	27.9	3.4	77.2	49.0	13.5
20-39 y	55.4	24.7	4.1	70.3	46.6	11.8
40-59 y	65.0	29.7	2.9	81.5	50.6	15.1
60 y +	72.2	30.5	3.0	82.2	50.3	14.0

BMI 25+= overweight or obese  
BMI 30+= obese (Class I, II, or III)  
BMI 40+= Class III or extremely obese

Source: Hedley et al, JAMA 2004;2847-2850 (June 16)

### % of U.S. Non-Hispanic Black Boys and Girls Above Overweight and Obesity Cutoffs: 1999-2002

	Boys		Girls	
	BMI ≥85 <sup>th</sup> percentile	BMI ≥ 95 <sup>th</sup> percentile	BMI ≥ 85 <sup>th</sup> percentile	BMI ≥ 95 <sup>th</sup> percentile
6-19 y	31.0	17.9	40.1	23.2
2-5 y	20.9	8.0	25.6	9.6
6-11 y	29.7	17.0	37.9	22.8
12-19 y	32.1	18.7	41.9	23.6

BMI 85<sup>th</sup> percentile and over = at risk of overweight  
BMI 95<sup>th</sup> percentile and over = overweight

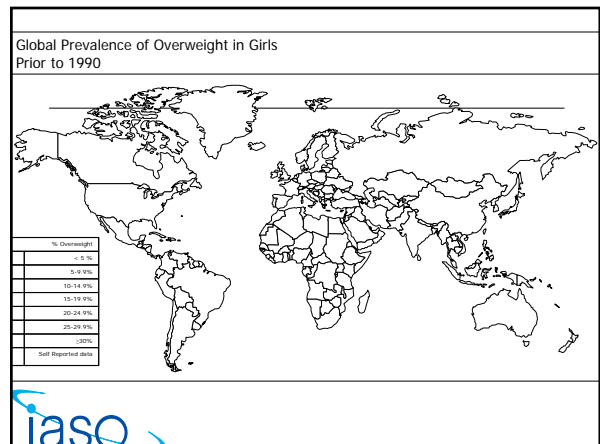
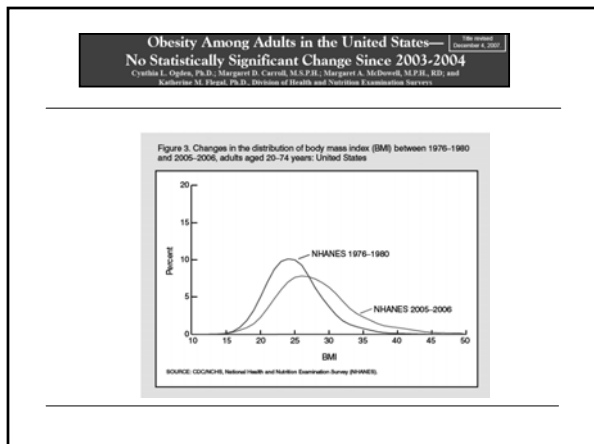
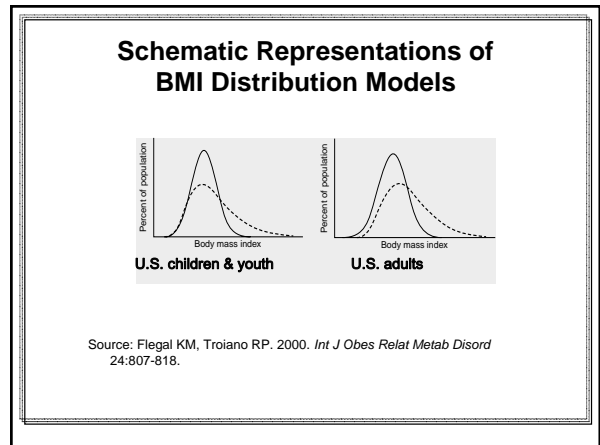
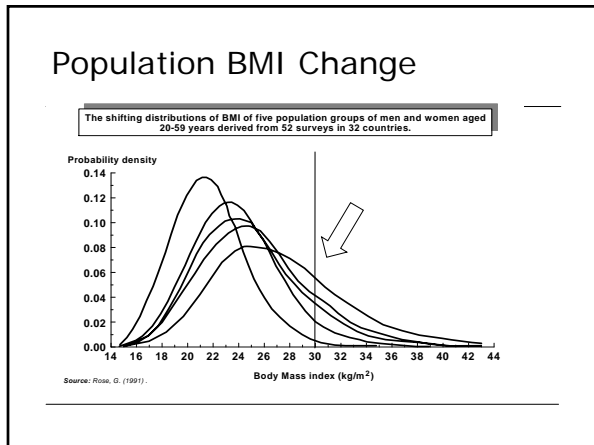
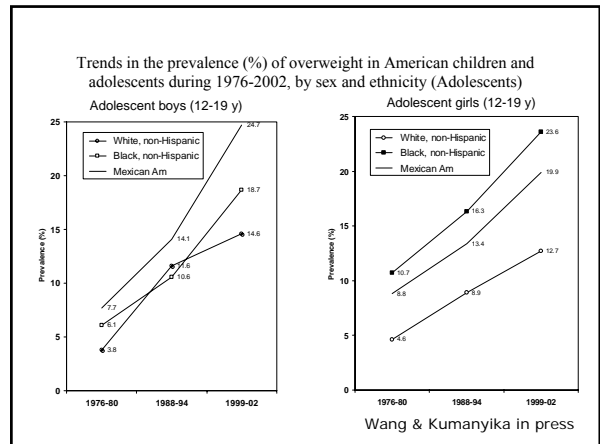
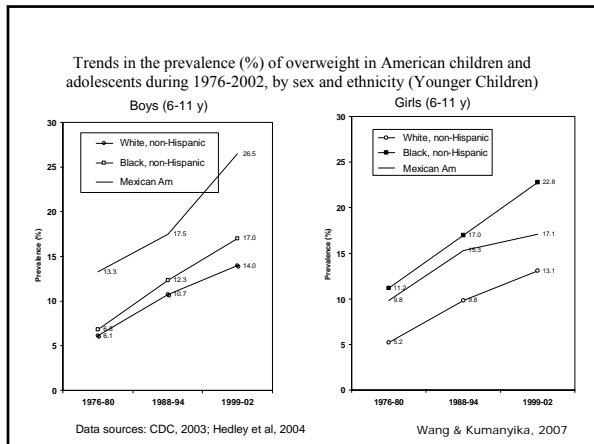
Source: Hedley et al, JAMA 2004;2847-2850 (June 16)

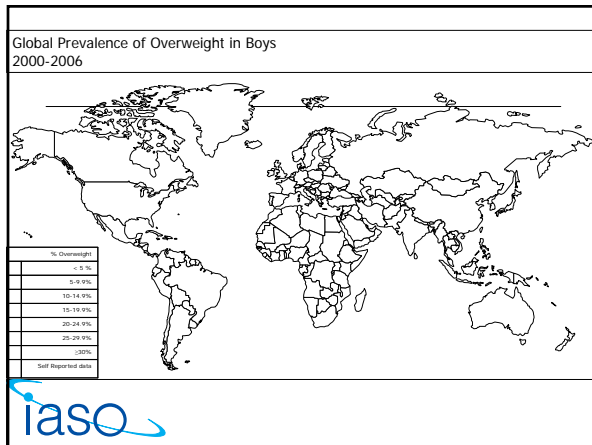
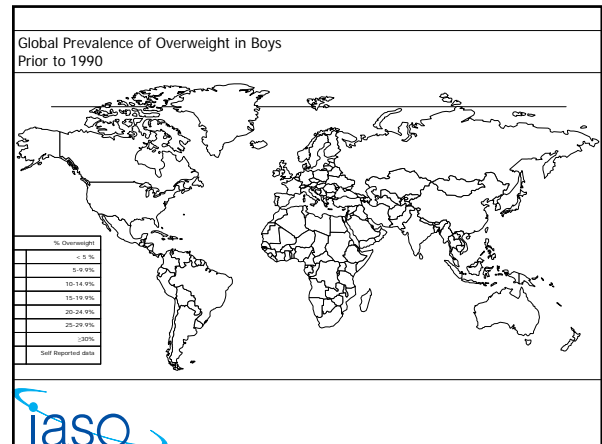
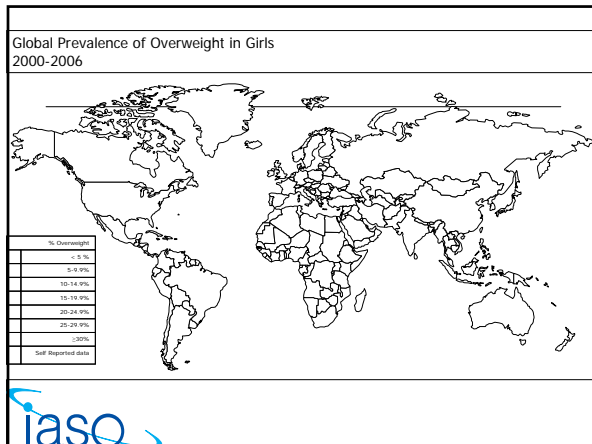
### Trends in Adult Obesity

Percent

Note: Data are for ages 20 years and over, age adjusted to the 2000 standard population. Obesity is defined as BMI ≥ 30.0.  
Source: National Health Examination Survey, National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys I, II, III and 1999-2000, NCHS, CDC.

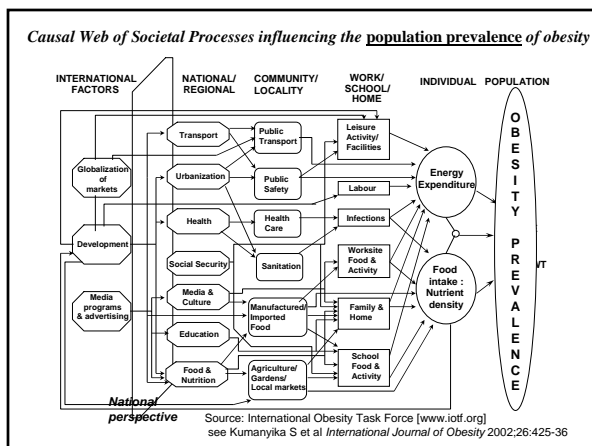
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Paradigm shift

- Obesity levels reflect changes in society
  - Economic development
  - Modernization and technology
  - Urbanization
  - Food production and marketing
  - Patterns of media use
  - Women's roles



Excess environmental risk in communities of color: Access

- Targeted marketing
- Excess fast food outlets
- Few supermarkets
- Limited shelf choices in groceries
- Availability of high-fat food
- Less private transportation
- Poorer public transportation

Yancey AK, Kumanyika SK, et al. review. Preventing Chronic Disease  
Available from: URL: [http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2004/jan/03\\_0012.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2004/jan/03_0012.htm)

Excess environmental risk in communities of color: Economics

- **Low neighborhood demand for low cal/low fat foods**
- **Low family incomes and cash flow**
- **Other household expenses**
- **Little home-grown food**
- **Financial incentives offered to under-resourced schools by commercial cafeteria vendors**

Yancey AK, Kumanyika SK, et al. review. Preventing Chronic Disease  
Available from: URL: [http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2004/jan/03\\_0012.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2004/jan/03_0012.htm)

## AACORN's Purpose and Rationale

- To improve the quality, quantity, and effective translation of research to address weight issues in African American communities
  - Extremely low representation of African American issues in the obesity and related literatures, coupled with extremely high need for attention to obesity and related issues in the African American community
  - Potential benefits of a cross-mentoring model for African American scholars with relevant interests
  - Need for an expanded obesity research paradigm

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## African American Collaborative Obesity Research Network (AACORN)

- Researchers across the US with diverse interests and expertise related to African American health, especially food, nutrition, weight, weight related health problems and women's health
  - African American and selected other scholars
  - Early career scholars, established scholars, and scholars in training
  - Community research partners

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## AFRICAN AMERICAN COLLABORATIVE OBESITY RESEARCH NETWORK

Second Annual Scientific Meeting & Workshop

Achieving Healthy Weight in African American Communities: Interdisciplinary Research Directions



Sponsored by the Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

August 9 – 10, 2004  
Wyndham Hotel Downtown

## Research Focus: What is the Question?

Interventions on eating, physical activity, and weight in African Americans

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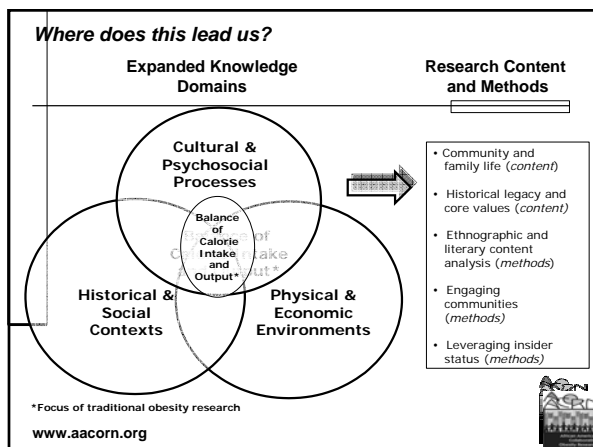
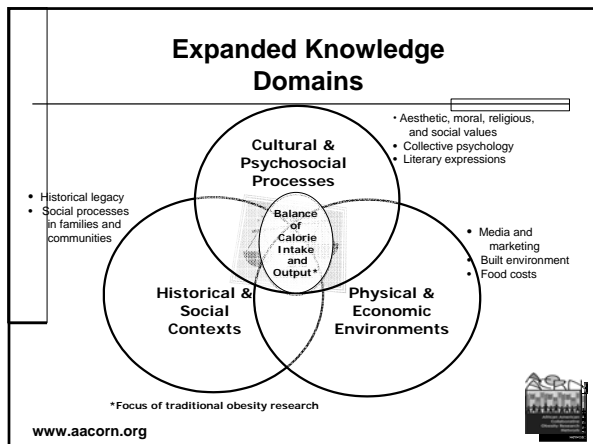


*"In order to gain the most out of this session, I encourage each of you to lay aside the usual framework that you use to take in information at scientific meetings and imagine that you have awakened, like Dorothy and Toto, and found yourself in Oz, where all that you know no longer governs all that is..."*

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Joanne Banks-Wallace, RN, PhD





- ### Community and Family Life
- Community-specific environmental influences
  - Community structure and organization
  - Women as a central focus
  - Heterogeneity
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- ### Jarrett... *Qualitative sociological research, Chicago South Side*
- Gaining a sense of contexts, routines, and rhythms
  - All types of family structures and family dynamics
  - Families "subsiding" communities
  - Resource pools, daily routines
  - Strong normative support for self-sacrificing mothers
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- ### Sheftall...literary works cited
- Becky W. Thompson, *Black Female, Hungry and Hurting*
  - Retha Powers, *Fat is a Black Woman's Issue* (Essence, 1989)
  - bell hooks, *Sisters of the Yam*
  - Gloria Naylor, *Linden Hills*
  - Alice Walker, *Meridian*
  - Gayle Pemberton, *The Hottest Water in Chicago*
  - Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*
  - June Jordan, *Free Flight* (in *Passion, New Poems*)
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## One response

- Is America ready for African Americans to be healthy?

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## Historical Legacy and Core Values

- Historical importance of trust
- Collective trauma

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## McGary...spiritual and philosophical underpinning

- What can we learn from the methods and teaching of philosophy?
- Recognize three important African American community values—
  - Loyalty (rationale and empirically validated)
  - Trustworthiness
  - Justice
    - Framed as rights of individuals and groups ("non-consequentialist" view), not justice in terms of the good of society as a whole (consequentialist view)

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## James Myers...Collective Psyche

- Importance of culture
- Uniqueness of African American experience
- Emphasis on achieving optimal health
- Collective and individual adaptations
- Changes across generations

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## Ethnographic and literary content analysis

- Ethnographic research methods
- Literary representations of African American life

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## Engaging Communities

- Community members as equal research partners
- Community strengths
- Benefits to researched communities

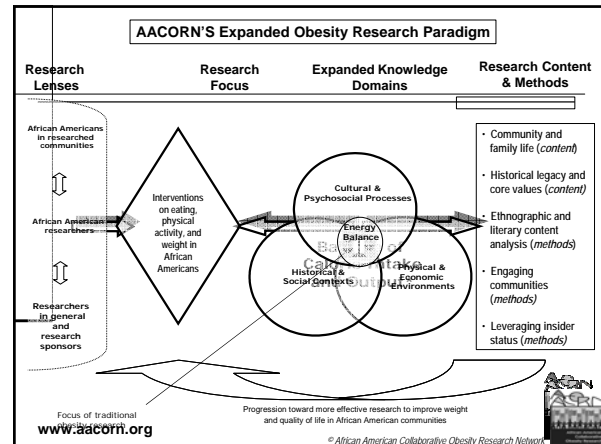
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## Leveraging Insider Status

- Trust and credibility
- Connections to communities of reference
- Objectivity and expectations
- Social and professional support

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## Outline

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### *Participatory Research on African American Community Weight Issues: Defining the State of the Art*

- **2<sup>nd</sup> National Invited Workshop: August 2006**
  - CBPR concepts and principles and potential implementation regarding weight interventions
  - What constitutes a successful research project to community residents?
  - What is involved in conducting research in communities?

### *Participatory Research on African American Community Weight Issues: Defining the State of the Art*

- Community priorities other than obesity (e.g., housing, violence and incarceration) that may be more immediate than those related to obesity and how these interface with efforts to address obesity; and
- Model CBPR programs (on any topic)
- Views of funders and scientific journal editors

### Linking to obesity research mainstream (examples)

- **Cultural and psychosocial processes** ⇔ **Overeating and stress**
- **Historical and social contexts** ⇔ **Information and Health services**
- **Physical and economic environments** ⇔ **Built environment, Price, and Marketing**

## Research Design and Implementation

- **Commitment to CBPR**
- **Think Tanks**
- **Broader Literature Reviews**
- **Consultant Pool**
- **Visibility and Critical Mass**

