Poor Eating Habits due to Low Income

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Unhealthy eating is a growing epidemic in America but it is happening really close to you. In Segundo Barrio there are many families that are eating unhealthy. The main causes of eating unhealthy is that it is a fast and easy option to buy fast food, a lot of Americans are just plain lazy to make a healthy meal, and there are not always options available to us to eat healthy. What many do know is that Segundo Barrio is a low income community. What many do not know is that low income communities tend to eat unhealthier than higher income communities. Therefore, eating unhealthy leads to many medical issues. El Paso is a border city and Segundo Barrio holds many of the immigrants that cross due to the fact that it is the closest community to the border. Border cities have the worst health compared to other cities. Low income is a main cause into families eating unhealthy in Segundo Barrio.

Background

To better understand the Segundo Barrio community as a whole I will lay the background necessary. Like I stated most of the population in Segundo Barrio is made up of immigrants who cross from Mexico. Approximately 82.2 percent of the population in El Paso County is Hispanic (UTEP, 2011 para. 4). Studies show that one of the unhealthiest food lifestyle is the Mexican culture. It is high in calorie, saturated fat and sodium which causes health issues many times (Hurley & Liebman, 2009). The Segundo Barrio is established as a Hispanic community. The community not only is low income but it is also a Hispanic majority community. For many years Segundo Barrio held the title for the lowest income ZIP code in the US. In Segundo Barrio area the majority is about 55.3 percent females, whether it was to get out of Juarez or because they were single mothers that could only afford a certain amount. The authors describe that these women are poor so they can barely afford meals but then they are persuade not to eaten certain thing or not to eat at all due to social status (Dammann, & Smith, 2009). Segundo Barrio was just
setup to be an unhealthy community due to factors but we do not see and change those factors that.

“In 2006, the U.S, Census Bureau estimated that the median household income was $36,519 which is less than the median statewide household income of $50,049” (UTEP, 2011, para. 5). Not only is Segundo Barrio underprivileged but El Paso as whole is underprivileged and has the same problem as the Segundo Barrio community, unhealthy eating habits. The average income in El Paso is pretty low income especially compared to the rest of Texas. My problem has to do with the fact that low income leads to unhealthy eating habits which causes many health problems in the community. Unhealthy life styles lead to higher cost in health care (Phillips, 2002). These unhealthy eating habits due to low income spread out leading to many other problems as described. Since these families are low income they cannot afford healthy food so they buy greasy food. The greasy food gives these people health problems but they cannot afford health care due to the demand. The demand is due to the fact that so many low income families need it after getting ill because of the unhealthy food. Not being able to get health care leaves them in a desperate and dangerous state.

They have found that, disadvantage; lower income communities have better access to unhealthy eating choices rather than healthy eating choices (Hilmers, Hilmers, & Dave 2012). In the world today practically every corner you turn there is some sort of fast-food restaurant. This makes it easily accessible for these lower income families, who probably work more than one job, to pick up fast-food without having exerted extra strength since they are tired from work. Many of these fats-food places may offer “healthy” choices, but are they truly as healthy as they claim to be? No they are not healthy at all because of some ingredients used in the fast-food. Processed food contains a high level of phosphate (Shutto, 2011). Phosphate is a large factor in
the death of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). Fast-food most of the time does not even use so to say “real meat” in there burgers. These low income families think that it is alright to be constantly being eating fast-food but the truth is that too much fast food leads to heart problems because of the high content in grease and fat.

(The table shows the percentage among certain groups of eating fast-food (Tepper, 2013).)

The table was just recently created his year in July so this is current information rather than old. Some of the problem I have in my report looks to be fair but it also fought against in this chart. My problem isn’t the highest in the chart it is actually spread out. The chart helps me because it shows that America as a whole eats a lot of fast-food, so there is already that pre-existing problem that just contributes to that factor. Society has already set this kind of unhealthy eating in place, so society influences everybody to do the same and that it is normal now. Some numbers related to the factors of my community problem may have low percentages in the chart, but they most likely will increase. The most common reason for the lack of healthy foods as
described in the article is due to social and spatial barriers (Widener, 2012). Segundo Barrio has large social and spatial barriers; therefore it is not a key community you want to build a grocery store in but rather a fast-food restaurant in. These factors are what contribute to the community eating unhealthy. Big grocery stores want to make money not lose it and Segundo Barrio is often thought of as a dangerous, robbery filled community. The result is the people of the community resorting to fast-food (Widener, 2012).

The conclusion to the problem is plain and simple. There are an increasing number of people in the Segundo Barrio community who make low income. The low income results in working hard and long hours so you don’t want to come home and cook a meal but would rather buy fast-food. Also, due to the community’s bad standards many grocery companies don’t feel that the community is a prime location to set up shop so they don’t. Instead it is a go ahead community for fast-food businesses. This lead to poor health for the people of Segundo Barrio. Since there are so many people with poor health, creates high health care cost that they cannot afford. Still there is nothing being done to improve a healthy eating lifestyle in Segundo Barrio because everyone is oblivious to these facts.
References


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