

The Problem of Obesity in the United States

~The background is fast food!?

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1. Introduction

We looked at the American obesity problem. Obesity in America is common, serious, and costs much money. The prevalence of obesity was 39.8%, affecting approximately 93.3 million U.S. adults, between 2015 and 2016. Obesity is caused by many factors, including eating habits, lifestyle habits, and financial problems. We looked at eating habits, especially fast food, which seemed to be significantly related to the obesity problem in the United States. We have hypothesized that fast food became widespread because it was cheap and saved the time and effort Americans spend on cooking.

2. Research

We did a literature search by using the Internet, CDC Work, and books. Also, we asked some questions to university professors by sending some emails.

3. Results

Upon completion of our research we answered the following questions

(1)What is fast food?

First, fast foods contain a lot of carbohydrates and lipids, while containing extremely low level of dietary fiber. The inevitable high calories in these foods results in gaining weight. In addition, in order to pursue low prices, manufactures use poor sugars and lipids in large quantities, making the food more likely to become lipids in the body after eating. In addition, when fat and carbohydrates are consumed at the same time, a lot of insulin is secreted and absorbed easily.

(2)Effects of obesity

First, obesity increases the burden on bones and joints and tends to cause joint disorders such as back pain and knee pain. Therefore, even a small impact from falling or being hit can cause fractures easily in people who are obese.

Second, obesity has a major influence on the development of gout from hyperuricemia, promotes steatosis, and sleep apnea syndrome, which is a cause of sudden death. According

to a recent U.S. study, 17 of 22 cancers increase in frequency as people become obese, especially colon, liver, gallbladder, pancreas, uterus, and kidney cancers. Now, lifestyle-related diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension, and dyslipidemia have received the most attention in medical journals. Obesity exacerbates those lifestyle-related diseases and damages or weakens blood vessels, eventually causing arteriosclerosis. As a result, serious mortality from angina pectoris (chest pain or pressure), myocardial infarction (heart attack), and stroke can increase due to obesity. As a result, far more people die from obesity-related illnesses than from accidents.

Third, it is difficult for people who gain weight to find clothes which fit their bodies properly. Body fat makes it difficult for people to wear socks and they may bite the inside of their cheeks. When riding a theme park vehicle, safety belts and safety bars cannot be worn properly or cannot be used resulting in the exclusion of obese people from this activity. In extreme cases, in the United States, some morbidly obese people couldn't be taken in an ambulance to a hospital for emergency care.

(3) Social factors behind the spread of fast food

We examined the factors related to the spread of fast food from the perspective of social trends over time. In the 1950s when famous fast food restaurants began operations in the United States, the U.S. population was experiencing a second baby boom. The American birth rate is about 3.9 million people per year, but at that time, 4.2 to 4.3 million births per year lasted for more than 10 years.

In the early 1960s, Second Wave Feminism started in the United States. Feminism is a general term for women's liberation, philosophy, and social movements in political and cultural systems. It aims to make society realize everyone can exercise equal rights without gender discrimination. In first wave feminism, women sought voting rights, and to establish an active position in society. The second wave aimed at not just a right to work, but equality in the workplace, the right to enroll in famous men's universities, and the legalization of abortion. This movement promoted women's advancement in society.

4. Discussion

From the social factors in the 1950s, we thought about the new eating habits that developed concurrently. If babies get used to eating fast food, they will continue to eat it as they grow up. In this way, a new food culture different from the previous generation was created and spread throughout the United States.

From the social factors in the 1960s, feminism has promoted women's advancement in society, so women were not spending as many hours on cooking and housework as they had in the past. This may be one explanation why the demand for fast food grew rapidly in the 1960s.

5. Conclusion

Fast food has spread all over the world. In the United States, it became so widespread that it appears to contribute to an obesity health epidemic. Now it is almost impossible to remove this fast food from our lives. Therefore, it is necessary for each person to think deeply about a healthy diet and make educated food choices. Future research should be conducted to find replacements for unhealthy ingredients which will lead to the creation of healthier fast food alternatives.

6. References

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