SOCIAL ECOLOGY, NUTRITION AND CHILDHOOD OBESITY IN UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

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Determinants of Health
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- **Definition:**
  - Broad classes of factors that are powerful in their cumulative and aggregate effects on health
  - They are forces that shape behavioral and environmental risk factors

- **Categories of factors:**
  - Personal determinants
  - Social determinants
  - Economic determinants
  - Environmental determinants
  - Cultural determinants
Lifestyle Factors

- Practicing healthy habits can significantly decrease our chances of developing chronic disease (USDHHS, 1990).

- “Genes load the gun. Lifestyle pulls the trigger” by Dr. Elliot Joslin

- Of all the health determinants, lifestyle factors are among the most controllable and influential factors
Multi-influences on Food Choices

The “moment” of food choice, for humans and other animals, is a step in a series of behaviors organized for the quest for food.

There is a arousal by biological and cultural motives, detection of food, decision to accept food…
Biological Influence

- Two forms:
  1. Physiological mechanisms--
     - What is going on in the body when a food choice occurs
  2. Brain
     - How and where information about metabolic state is integrated with information about the environment, other motives
Psychological Influence

- **Origin of preferences:**
  - Individuals vary widely in their food preferences
    1. Genetics
    2. Early experience with parents
    3. Peer influence
    4. External influence, like media

- **Acquisition of preferences:**
  1. Exposure to cultural traditions, family practices

- **Food choice in the moment:**
  1. Physical arrangement of food
  2. Beliefs about food
  3. Knowledge about the food—taste and health values
Social Influence

- **Age:**
  - Digesting system

- **Gender:**
  1. Meat avoidance is more common in women
  2. Women is more concerned with weight

- **Social status:**
  1. Income
  2. Living environment
Cultural Influence

- What is your culture?

- What is the traditional food?

- Meaning of food?