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Exploration of Societal Barriers to a Balanced and Healthy Diet Among African-American Middle-School Students in Philadelphia

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Exploration of Societal Barriers to a Balanced and Healthy Diet Among African-American Middle-School Students in Philadelphia

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Background

- Diet-related chronic conditions are top contributors of disability and premature death
 - Including: obesity, diabetes, dyslipidemia, hypertension
 - Disproportionate effect on minority populations
- There is a growing rate of diet-related chronic conditions in youth, particularly obesity
- 40% of youth in Philadelphia are classified as overweight or obese
- Childhood obesity is associated with increased healthcare costs and utilization
 - \$14,000,000,000 annually in U.S.

Method

- Target population: African-American adolescents in Philadelphia middle-schools (ages 10-14)
- Review of literature utilizing databases PubMed, Embase, SCOPUS, and the CDC
- Key words include Nutrition, Diet, Food Environment, Philadelphia, Adolescent, Middle-School

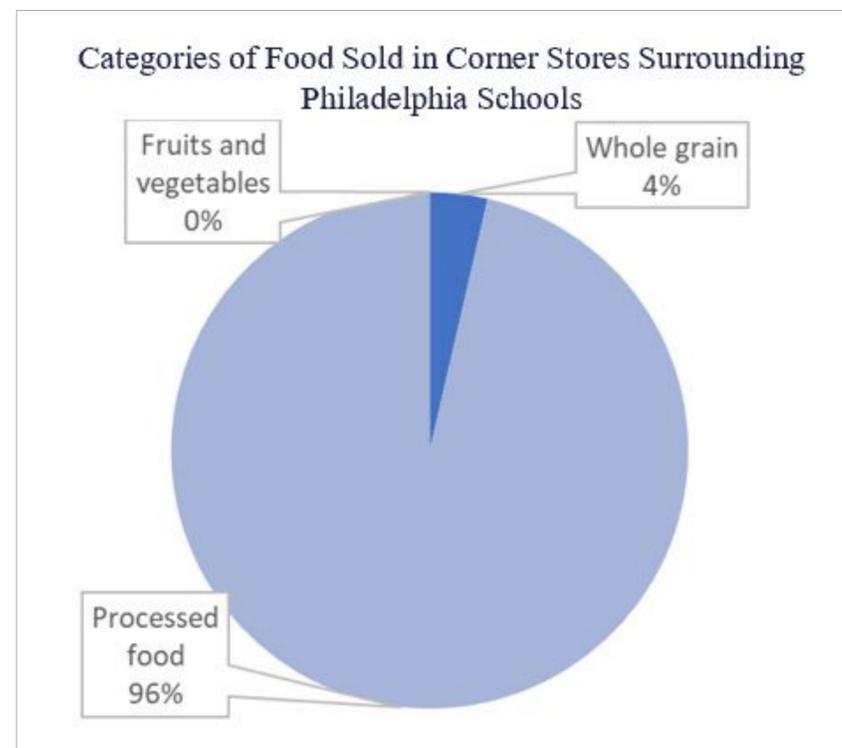
Results

Barriers within Philadelphia middle-schools

- Popular school cafeteria foods reported by students are associated with a low nutritional value
 - Top 4: Pizza, French fries, hot dogs, hamburgers
- School cafeteria-food accounts for over half of daily caloric intake

Barriers outside of Philadelphia middle-schools

- Corner stores
 - Accounts for 78% of food retail outlets in Philadelphia



Results Continued

- Socioeconomics
 - \$0.590 (per serving of 'healthy' food) vs. \$0.298 (per serving of 'unhealthy' food)
- Targeted corporate advertisements

Advertisements Relative to Child Serving Institutions	
Distance (feet)	% of Total Ads In Philadelphia
<1000	66.4
<1500	80.4
<2000	90.2

- The proportion of African-American children at a child serving institution is a significant positive predictor of ad clustering ($p < 0.04$)

Discussion/Conclusion

- Schools and corner stores lack in providing adequate healthy food options for youth
- African-American youth are being targeted by advertisements for unhealthy food options
- Improved zoning ordinances for ads may improve eating behavior for youth
- Increased affordability of healthy food options may improve eating choices

Limitations

- Studies used were primarily cross-sectional
- Some studies used had a small sample size and samples that were not randomized