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# From Family to Peer Setting: Food Choices of College Freshmen Linda D. Burbidge and Hikaru Hanawa Peterson <br> Department of Agricultural Economics, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 

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# From Family to Peer Setting: Food Choices of College Freshmen 

## Linda D. Burbidge and Hikaru Hanawa Peterson

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Introduction

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Suggested/Current Food Policy Interventions:
Taxes on Junk foods
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Subsidies on fruits and
Subsidies on fruits and vegetables
Banning of trans-fats in in New York City
Removal of vending machines from schools
Coming soon: FDA regulations on sodium
Findings in the Literature:
Drewnowski \& Darmon (2005)
-Inverse relationship between diet cost \& energy density of diet
:Sometimes the energy dense diet is selected wilfully
-Rational addicition model (2008)
-Price hikes deterred normal weight
but tot overweight \& obese poople -Found countries with very dissimilar for
experienced obesity increases as well

If altering food price is a relatively ineffective means of getting the
result that society desires (i.e, lower body mass index (BMI) of the verall population), then where should we go from here? If foods addicitive like some researchers suggest, the issue beeomes one of
either, a) altering external factors, like food environment or b) altering either, a) altering external factors,
internal factors, like food choice.

An Alternative direction for policy: Food Environment \& Choice
Group Choice
Some theories suggest that peoples' choices are partly due to thei
preferences $\&$ the preferences of some group or some social influence. Mostc commonly, we think of households, work groups or couples as entities in which preferencer
each other (Yang and Allenby, 2003).
We might expect for parents to exert high influence over decisions made in the family setting, but some studies have shown that childre will actually exert moro influence, especially when it comes to

Peer Influence

- Changing their peer group
-From living with parents to being atonol
- New triends \& situations
-Under studied when it comes to obesity
-Candidate for effective prevention before poor habits are formed




## Insight?!

When asked. How have your eating habits changed during your
-
"tI is harder to restrict my diet when the meal plan at the dining
center is already paid for" -
"I can eat as much as I want because there's no limit or extra pay
This makes me eat like a cow!"

| Results |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Food Consumption |  |  |  |
| The food consumption equations showed a significant impact of the peer effect for their change in beverage consumption. The result is negative, contrary to our expectations, indicating when the friend consumed more as compared to the parents, the individual would consume less. |  |  |  |
| The Change in Weight Equation |  |  |  |
| Variable | Estimate | St. Err. | $P$-value |
| Intercept | -2.7353 | 0.6638 | 0.0002 |
| Meal Plan? ( $1=$ yes, $0=n \mathrm{o}$ ) | 0.7283 | 0.2602 | 0.0086 |
| Time per week family ate together | 0.3483 | 0.1321 | 0.0128 |
| Female ( $1=$ yes, $0=$ no $)$ | 0.4018 | 0.2225 | 0.0803 |
| Pregnant ( $1=$ yes, $0=n 0$ ) | 0.5229 | 0.5420 | 0.3419 |
| Depressed | 0.4421 | 0.2275 | 0.06 |
| Predicted changes in average daily consumption of food groups: |  |  |  |
| Beverages | 0.0005 | 0.0012 | 0.6744 |
| Dairy | -0.0007 | 0.0005 | 0.188 |
| Meats/Main dishes | 0.0005 | 0.0004 | 0.2002 |
| Breads/Grains | 0.0009 | 0.0006 | 0.1124 |
| Fruits/Veggies | -0.0017 | 0.0013 | 0.2184 |
| Snacks/Desserts | -0.0010 | 0.0004 | 0.01 |

-Being on a meal plan increased a student's BMI by about $0.73 \mathrm{~kg} / \mathrm{m}^{2}$. -The more a family ate together, the more likely the student was to
gain weight in college. Perhaps an indicator of the peer effect? -Consistent with previous studies, females were more likely to gain weight.
-Also, experiencing more 3 or more depression symptoms increased
-Interestingly, eating fewer snacks increased their BMI... are fewe
snacks being converted to larger meal portions?

## Literature cited

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overweigh"
Vang, S. \& Allenby, G.M.
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