FAST FOOD

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Abstract

This paper seeks to demonstrate that fast foods are a cause of obesity. This is an answer to the research question “Are fast foods a cause of obesity?” The systematic literature review methodology has been utilized to answer the research question. Recent and relevant articles and publications have been utilized to derive both qualitative and quantitative data. Among the topics discussed include the growth of fast food business, the danger of obesity to human health, and the relationship between fast foods and obesity. On the entity of growth of fast food business, it is noted that the recent past has been characterized by globalization of fast food chains. The paper notes that due to the concomitant economic development, urbanization and a preference of white collar jobs, humans have resulted to shortcuts like fast foods instead of preparing the same at home. The paper also aligns the dangers of obesity such as Diabetes and Hypertension. Finally a relationship between the use of fast foods and obesity is drawn where it is found that when all the other factors are held constant, fast foods directly cause childhood and adulthood obesity. A conclusion is made that in fast foods are a major cause of obesity especially in the recent past.

Brainstorm/Schedule

Living on an island, long ago many ancestors depended on fruits, grown plants, or raised livestock for daily meals to survive. The social significance of food was one of the most noticeable aspects of life in the Micronesia. An article from Marianas Variety mentioned an historian saying “Food was the focal point of most ceremonial occasions like feasts for which large quantities of food were required and were prepared for specific gatherings like religious ceremonies, and government celebrations.” Now many fast food industries are rising all over the Micronesia such as Mcdonalds, Taco Bell, and KFC.

Numerous islanders tend to order takeout meals for lunch or dinner instead of making home cooked meals. Disregarding the healthiness of what they are consuming in their daily meals, and the negative effects that fast food can cause to their health. There are many risks such as becoming obese, getting diabetes and risking the chance of having heart diseases. Because of fast food industries increasing, and gaining more customers each year many people face the possibility of dying at an early age.

According to IOSR Journal of Nursing and Health Science, fast food is loaded with calories from refined sugar and fats and contain high amount of sodium increasing the risk of obesity. Obesity has become an emerging pandemic through this generation because 70% of kids who are overweight become overweight adults. Since becoming obese people are more drawn to lying in bed and becoming couch potatoes due to not being able to carry their weight, or the lack of energy from no exercise. This research will clarify how fast food industries are impacting the health of not just children but also adults. It will also bring awareness to why fast food is unhealthy and hopefully encourages families to start making home cooked meals to know what ingredients they are putting in their bodies. For the first 2 weeks a research of finding the major fast food industries, and interviewing the management of each companies that are gaining the most customers to help determine what is in their menu that has people coming back Do they plan to keep those items on their menu or remove it? Do the companies plan to open up more vendors in other locations around the island?

The next 4 weeks will be conducting a survey of 25 participants who will be answering a series of questions. The survey will include questions such as do they eat fast food take out or cook meals at home, and how often do they eat fast food. If necessary, adding more surveyors per week at the fast food industries can find out who are frequent buyers. The survey will be reviewed and analyzed on the 7th week to determine why they are drawn to eating out, and what to do to help cut down on fast food intake. The following weeks will be used for reviewing and peer checking to make any provisional writing final.

Research and interviews will be conducted on the following dates:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sep. 11 – 25, 2017 | Interview with McDonalds, Taco Bell, KFC |
| Sep. 25 - Oct. 20, 2017 | Secondary research: Survey |
| Oct.20 – Nov. 10, 2017  Nov. 10 – Nov. 20, 2017  Nov. 20 – Nov. 30, 2017 | Review  Provisional writing  Final |

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Introduction

Fast food is the type of commercial meals that are prepared, served or distributed within a short time (Garcia et al. 2012). Fast foods are sold in small enterprises mainly in the urban centers where there is a large concentration of people. Due to work commitments and reduced family times, many households have resulted into using the fast foods even for their primary meals like breakfast, lunch and dinner. A major characteristic of these types of foods is that they are highly processed and have less nutritional value than other types of meals(Garcia et al. 2012). Some of the dishes served in the fast food enterprises include hamburgers, French fries, soft drinks, milk shakes and cakes. Many of these foods have a high content of fats, saturated slats and sugars than the home cooked meals. For this reason, the processed foods have been linked with diseases like obesity, type 2 diabetes and colorectal cancer. The conditions develop gradually over time and thus the usage of the meals from when one is young adds to the risks. The developed nations have seen an exponential growth in the fast food business with the likes of McDonalds and KFC going global. The developing nations have also not been left behind since the international and local brands have also shown significant growth. The issue of childhood and adult obesity is thus on a global scale with fast foods being one of the major contributors.

Background

Childhood obesity has become a major problem in many developed countries. Obesity is an emerging health and psychological concern in the 21st century (Ogden at al. 2014). According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2017), 20% of the children in the USA are obese. CDC also makes it clear that today, there are thrice more cases of childhood obesity than 40 years ago (CDC, 2017). This means that the health concern has increased at an alarming rate and unless something is done, the increase is not bound to stop. This pattern of the USA is mirrored in other developing countries due to the change in lifestyle. Childhood and adulthood obesity poses serious health and psychological risks to the child both in the short term and the long term. It has been shown that 3000 adults who buy from a fast food more than twice in a week have become obese in a span of 15 years(Garcia et al. 2012). This study confirms that individuals who frequently visit the fast foods have a higher risk of developing obesity than those who use homemade food.

The menace of obesity comes at the midst of reckless living behaviors like avoiding the physically strenuous activities. The consumption of highly processed foods cannot be held solely accountable for the increase in cases of obesity(Pulgarón, 2013). Many consumers also have accompanied sedentary lifestyle that further complicates the issue of weight gain. However, it should be noted that the control of eating behavior is superior to physical exercise as far as weight gain is concerned. Individuals who take unhealthy diets but engage in physical exercises are also likely to struggle with weight issues. Fast foods are thus a major contributor of the weight of an individual and too much of it is likely to be detrimental(Schlosser, 2012).

Methodology

In this article, the methodology of literature review will be applied. Accredited or peer reviewed articles will be used to gather information about the relationship between fast foods and the risk of obesity. Various key words will be used to search the articles to be reviewed. These key words include Obesity, Fast foods, home based foods and lifestyle conditions.10 articles and recent publications will be selected and be used to draw the relationship between fast foods and obesity and also form meaningful conclusions and recommendations. The date of publication of these articles will also be a major consideration. Articles that are less than five years will be given higher priority. The selection of recent publications will aid in getting updated information about the topic at hand. Both qualitative and quantitative data can be obtained from the review of literature. A systematic literature review is the most convenient method of identification, appraisal and comparison of data in order to answer the research question. Also, a survey will be conducted to determine the amount of people visiting fast food restaurants. The survey will help determine what ages and gender are most often at risk for obesity and how often they visit fast food restaurants. Another method is by emailing health experts to help learn more about the negative effects of eating fast food.

Process Essay: Fast Food Health Survey

As I start my research on how fast food has negative effects on our health, I had to think of ways to gather my data. Many researchers and participants have allowed me to find answers to include to my research. First, the most data I have received from was by creating a fast food health survey for people to take. Next, another method used to help with the research is by accessing the data for the amount of deaths that are caused by bad health. Lastly, conducting an interview with a nutritionist who specializes in nutrition and knows about the fast food ingredients can help you gather more evidence for your research.

First, deciding who would be suitable to take the survey is very significant for getting the best results. You have to determine who the constant consumers of fast food industries are. Deciding the types of questions to add to the survey can help find answers you want to know. Simple yes or no questions are very simple and easy to analyze. Questions like do you think fast food is healthy, would you rather eat at home or order take out, and how often do you eat at fast food restaurants can help you learn about the consumers. Also, adding questions that ask for examples or their experiences can help you learn more about why they order fast food take outs. Another question that would be helpful to add in the survey is by using rating answers. Knowing how they feel about a certain question will show what is important to them or not.

Next, another method used to gather information is by collecting the data in the hospital to determine how many people are affected with bad health and how many actually lost their life because of it. Deciding what types of death is necessary to focus on your main health problems such as, obesity and heart attacks. After narrowing the main health issues you can research how fast food causes these health issues. Analyze the data you received from the hospital to determine the major cause of deaths and prove how fast food affects our health.

Lastly, conducting an interview with a nutritionist can help you learn more about the ingredients that fast food industries are using. Asking questions like, from your experience what draws you to want to eat from fast food industries, or is fast food healthy or not can help you learn about which meals is healthy or not. Also, asking questions like, are there any nutrients in fast food meals can help readers learn what is the main ingredients that is not healthy. Nutritionist can also help you learn why it affects our health and what kind of ingredients we should be eating. After your interview you can provide a summary of evidence as to why and how fast food affects our health.

In conclusion, using a survey, gathering data from the hospital and conducting an interview with a nutritionist can help determine how fast food is affecting our health. After deciding on your methods you can evaluate the survey and data to conclude on the results. After you settle on your result you can inform the public, friends and family how to keep a better health and ways to avoid obesity or heart attack.

Discussion

The growth of the fast food business.

Over the last few decades, the fast food line of business has grown exponentially not only in the developed countries but also in the developing world(Garcia et al. 2012). The fast food chain of restaurants have increased their branches due to the booming business. The Subway chain of restaurants is currently the biggest fast food company with a total of 24, 722 branches in the US only(Lang & Heasman, 2017). MacDonald’s is the second with 14, 098 branches. Starbucks comes third with 10, 821(Lang & Heasman, 2017). These three chains have many other branches oversees with McDonald’s being found in more than 120 countries with a customer base of about 120 million people(Lang & Heasman, 2017). Pizza hut, burger Kind and Dunkin’s Donuts are also large chains that have an almost global presence.

The fast food chains have menus that are dominated by highly processed foods like milkshake, burgers, soft drinks and fries. It has been shown that the standard soft drink like coke has an average of 10 tea spoonfuls of sugar(Lang & Heasman, 2017). The potato fries are dominantly carbohydrate meals with very little vitamins, proteins or minerals. Burgers are made of highly processed salts and sugars plus synthetic fats. A meal of fast food may thus contain more than 5 times the amount of calories that a traditional home cooked meal contains(Lang & Heasman, 2017). A consumer of these junk foods thus accumulates more calories which are stored in the body in form of fats leading to obesity.

Obesity and human health

Childhood obesity is a condition where a child gains excessive fat in his or her body (CDC, 2017). The Body Mass Index (BMI) is used to gauge the level of weight gain in people. To get the BMI of an individual, the weight is divided by the square of the height (WHO, 2017). The screening tool is preferred for children because it takes to account that they are growing. BMI differentiates between overweight children and their obese counterparts. Those with a BMI of below 95th percentile but above the 85th percentile are categorized as overweight (WHO, 2017). The children with a BMI of above 95th percentile are considered as obese (WHO, 2017). Being overweight is a precursor to obesity. In other words, the overweight children are more likely to become obese unless their lifestyle is changed. The increase in weight usually comes from the accumulation of fats in the body of a person over a period. This happens after the victim practices an unhealthy lifestyle of overeating and failure to do physical exercises.

Obesity is known to cause serious health problems to the child (Pulgarón, 2013). Childhood obesity is a significant risk factor for other chronic diseases like type 2 Diabetes, Hypertension, Bone diseases, Heart failure and other cardiovascular conditions like Atherosclerosis (Park et al. 2012). Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus is the most serious complication of childhood obesity. It is an acquired debilitating condition that is characterized by excessive blood sugar that later results to end organ damage through various ways (Park et al. 2012). Diabetes is also on the list of lifestyle conditions that are on the increase in the world today. Interestingly, the condition can be prevented through healthy living practices like physical exercises and healthy eating. Hypertension and Heart Failure are also interlinked conditions that can be modified through the change of lifestyle.

The relationship between obesity and fast foods.

In a study that was done over 15 years, it was shown that 3000 individuals who consumed fast foods at least twice a week developed obesity(Garcia et al. 2012). Although these individual had other risk factors like sedentary lifestyles, their counterparts who did not consume fast foods did not develop obesity. The two groups of individuals practicing the same lifestyles but gaining weight at different rates show that fast foods contribute significantly to obesity. The modification of the feeding habits has been shown as the main intervention to individuals who wish to lose weight. This confirms that high amounts of calories contribute immensely to obesity and other lifestyle diseases(Garcia et al. 2012). Lacks of physical exercises aggravate the development of obesity.

Obesity is related to current economic times and change in lifestyle of individuals (Wang & Lim, 2012). On the current times, much of the work is assisted by machines thanks to the technological advancement that the world has witnessed. This coupled with an improved economic status of most people which makes it possible to afford junk foods, vehicles, and household computer games and toys result in sedentary lifestyles (Wang & Lim, 2012). Since childhood obesity is a gradual occurrence, most parents do not realize it until it manifests. The economic boom, technological advancement and the preferential white collar jobs are associated with childhood obesity(Schlosser, 2012). There is an increased preference to the use of fast foods instead of home cooked meals due to the economic times and the growth of white collar jobs. The women who were traditionally housewives are nowadays taking office jobs leaving little time to prepare food for the family. With many fast food kiosks offering home deliveries, the need to cook for the family has reduced significantly.

Future suggestions/recommendations

Obesity comes as a result of poor life skills and thus it can be controlled. Although there is a genetic predisposition to the health condition, there are specific ways in which the problem can be addressed. If obesity runs in the family, it is important for the parents to be extra vigilant on how they raise their children (Gupta et al. 2012). The prevention of obesity is easier than its control. The parents should control the type of foods they give to their children from the time they start complementary feeding (Wang et al. 2013). The foods that are rich in carbohydrates and fats should be reduced in the various rations. This intervention would involve reducing the fast foods and popularizing home cooked meals. The fast food business should also be controlled through legislation(Schlosser, 2012). The government should require the chains to provide health related concerns in their adverts as it is the case for alcohol and tobacco. Also, keeping on track with an exercise schedule can help keep away all the weight from overeating. Being able to control your diet and exercise can help decrease the risk of having obesity. When people focus more on their diet we can prevent our body from getting certain diseases.

Conclusion

Overall, the sale of highly processed foods by the fast food chains is responsible for significant weight gain in the users. Although obesity has a genetic predisposition, the consumption of high calorie fast foods increases the risk by measurable figures. The presence of excess calories in the fast foods is the factor that makes them unhealthy for people. The fact that obesity is condition that builds over time, it can be concluded that the consumption of fast foods for a prolonged period leads to high BMIs. The amount of the consumed junk foods and frequency of consumption are the key determinant of the development of obesity among the consumers. Also, the survey was able to determine that the main consumers of fast food are between the ages of 20 to 25. It’s between those ages, because that age group tends to live on their own or have jobs and classes to attend to that they don’t have time to cook food at home. It also showed that most people are attracted to the fast food advertisements and what they see on posters or commercials. Either way fast food will always have an effect on our health if we keep ignoring the fact that consuming too much fast food will have the risk of obesity.

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Appendix A- Plot Survey

1. What is your gender?

Male

Female

2. Which category below includes your age?

9-15

16-20

21-25

26 or older

3. Do you know any healthy ingredients in fast food? (If yes, click on please specify)

Yes

No

(please specify)



4. How often do you eat fast food in a week?

1-2 times

3-4 times

5-6 times

7 times or more

5. How often do you cook meals at home?

1-2 times

3-4 times

5-6 times

7 times or more

6. What are your reasons for not cooking at home?



7. Have you ever been influenced by the promotions of fast food chain outlets? (If yes, click please specify)

Yes

No

(please specify)



8. Rank the following factors when choosing a fast food restaurant in order of importance to you. Choose (1) as the most important and (5) as the least important.



Taste



Price



Hours of operation



Nutritional Value



Convenience

9. When going to a fast food restaurant, how often do you utilize the drive-thru option?

Always

Very often

Sometimes

Never

10. Choose the fast food establishment that you eat food from most often.

McDonald's

Taco Bell

KFC

Subway

Other:

Appendix B – Letter

Joy Bauer

TV’s Top Nutritionist

Fast Food Nutrients

Dear Mrs. Bauer,

My name is Regina De Vero. I am a student at Northern Marianas College in Saipan taking an English 101 class. I am writing this letter to request your assistance, with a research project I am doing. I am working on this term, dealing with how fast food intake affects our health. As one of the top most influential people in health and fitness, I would like to ask for your opinion and experience. If it doesn’t take up any of your time, I would like to conduct a short interview with you to further my research. Otherwise, if you do not have time, I made a brief questionnaire to help give me a better understanding of your knowledge on food nutrient. I realize you are a very busy person, and would like to thank you in advance, for any time and answers you may provide in assisting me with my project. Below are the following questions I need your help in analyzing.

1. From your knowledge on nutrition, what are the major affects fast food have on our health and is there any healthy ingredients included in?

2. In your opinion, is it okay to eat fast food? If so, how often or how much should a person eat per week?

3. Through your experience with health and nutrition, have you ever binged on fast food take out? What cause you to do so?

Hoping to hear from you soon.

Best regards,

Regina De Vero

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