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A systematic review of school factors associated with long-term obesity outcomes in youth**Janelle Barrera Ikan and Heewon L. Gray**
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Childhood obesity is a growing public health concern because overweight/obese youth are more likely to become severely obese in adulthood, especially racial/ethnic minorities and higher BMI is associated with increased risks for cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and many forms of cancer in adulthood. How school factors play a role in obesity development has not been well-documented. The objective of this study was to conduct a systematic review examining the current evidence on the longitudinal associations between cultural and contextual school factors and children's obesity outcomes in school setting. The search was performed on PubMed, EMBASE, CINHALL and PsycINFO and the following key terms were applied: 1) Overweight or obesity or obese, 2) School factors, 3) Longitudinal. All articles written in English and published from 1991 to present and studies with school-aged children to adulthood were included. Titles, abstracts and reference lists were manually reviewed to identify and verify relevant articles. Seven articles were identified and used for the final systematic review process. Parent education, school environment such as school lunch and minutes of recess, type of school, mean socio-economic status, locality (urban, suburban, or rural) and parental involvement as an indicator of school quality were reported as significant school-level factors associated with obesity status/trajectory in youth. In conclusion, school factors examined in previous studies were mostly demographic characteristics or physical environment. Findings of this review indicate that there has been a limited research examining long-term influence of school culture or contextual factors associated with obesity. A summary table will be presented.

Biography

Janelle Barrera Ikan is a current graduate student at the College of Public Health at the University of South Florida with a concentration of Maternal and Child Health. She plans to pursue her PhD in Behavioral Health after graduation. She has also been working with Moffitt Healthy Kidz Program, educating the youth cancer prevention methods, such as nutrition, the dangers of tobacco and the importance of sun safety and physical activity. Her research interest include cancer prevention, behavioral interventions for child and adolescent, health education, cancer health disparities, community based research, program implementation and evaluation and child and health development.

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