

# **Achieving Healthy Weight in African-American Communities: Research Perspectives and Priorities**

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## **SOURCE**

Kumanyika SK1, Gary TL, Lancaster KJ, Samuel-Hodge CD, Banks-Wallace J, Beech BM, Hughes-Halbert C, Karanja N, Odoms-Young AM, Prewitt TE, Whitt-Glover MC (2012). "Achieving healthy weight in African-American communities: research perspectives and priorities". Article first published online: 27 NOV 2012. DOI: 10.1038/oby.2005.251

## **ABSTRACT**

The longstanding high burden of obesity in African- American women and the more recent, steeper than average rise in obesity prevalence among African-American chil- dren constitute a mandate for an increased focus on obesity prevention and treatment research in African- American communities. The African-American Collaborative Obesity Research Network (AACORN) was formed to stimulate and support greater participation in framing and im- plementing the obesity research agenda by investigators who have both social and cultural grounding in African- American life experiences and obesity-related scientific ex- pertise. AACORN's examination of obesity research agenda issues began in 2003 in conjunction with the Think Tank on Enhancing Obesity Research at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI).

The assessment was subsequently expanded to take into account the overall NIH strategic plan for obesity research, literature reviews, and descriptions of ongoing studies. In identifying priorities, AACORN members considered the quality, quantity, focus, and contextual rele- vance of published research relevant to obesity prevention and treatment in African-American adults or children. Fifteen rec- ommended research priorities are presented in five categories adapted from the NHLBI Think Tank proceedings: health effects, social and environmental context, prevention and treat- ment, research methods, and research training and funding.

These recommendations from an African-American perspective build on and reinforce certain aspects of the NHLBI and overall NIH research agendas by providing more specific rationale and directions on areas for enhancement in the type of research being done or in the conceptualization and implementation of that research."

## **KEYWORDS**

Ethnic Groups, Culture, Nutrition, Physical

## **INTRODUCTION**

This review critically reviews the article 'Considerations **Achieving Healthy Weight in African-American Communities: Research Perspectives and Priorities**' in the journal [\*obesity research Journal of Public Health\*](#). The review will first summarize the article.

The article will briefly analyze the effectiveness of the article's structure, investigating how the information is set out and whether the reader can access it efficiently. Thirdly, the review will critique the article, evaluating its authority, currency, accuracy, objectivity and coverage. The review will also analyze the graph before finally judging the article's accessibility and credibility. Overall the article was well written, clear and relevant.

## **ARTICLE SUMMARY**

The purpose of the article is to explore the need and advantages of conducting race based research with people of colour in the United States. The authoritative knowledge that these people can provide about their lives and their health could form the basis of collaboration between researchers and participants and lead to successful strategies to improve the health of African Americans. The article provides the goals for improving African Americans' health before investigating the issues related to cultural sensitivity, reciprocity, accountability and authoritative voices in order to argue that the research on them and their health must be attuned to the multiple identities they possess that are associated with ethnic groups, culture, nutrition, physical activities and research priority.

## **ARTICLE STRUCTURE**

The article was introduced with an abstract, which provided the stance or thesis developed by the article as well as a brief overview of main points. The rationales for the article and for the research it describes were also included. The paragraphs in the body were short and therefore the information in each paragraph was easy to access, however there were only 3-major body headings, with a lot of quite detailed information contained under each heading. As the article

described a research study that was conducted by the author, the article contained the conventional information normally provided in such a study.

For example there are sections related to the background and significance of the research, a review of the literature and the methodology as well as the data collection and analysis techniques used. The findings and conclusions were developed towards the end of the article however the conclusion was a very comprehensive summary of the main points covered by the article. However the comprehensive conclusion did develop future policy and research directions. References were cited in-text and set out clearly in the literature cited section. The article's structure was logically developed overall, with the use of short paragraphs helping the reader access the main points more easily.

The article was PDF document and included many links, which helped to make the information accessible. There were links to author, journal, subjects, citations and references which allow the reader to evaluate the article worth more effectively; however linked headings and subheadings may have allowed the reader to move through the paper more quickly.

## **ARTICLE CRITIQUE**

### *AUTHORITY:*

The journal, the Obesity Research, is a publication of the American Public Health Association, which is an objective unbiased public organization. It was found on the scholarly Academic Search Premier through [www.aacorn.org](http://www.aacorn.org) and NAASO copy right host, which is a highly credible research database.

The authors' credibility is established in a number of ways. These included their PhDs; the fact that the article was a group article; the fact that the authors are academicians working at the School of Public Health, at different American Universities; the fact that the research described in the article was supported by an AACORN which they are members as well as (NHLBI & NIH) Cooperative agreement and a grant from DNPA and penn –Cheyney EXPORT center inner city health; (NIH Grant P60 MD000209) and the links to the author's other articles in the Reference section.

### *ACCURACY:*

The source of the information in the article was a current research project. It was also backed up and supported by a comprehensive, recent reference list with these sources cited in-text to support both the literature review and the research itself. The strict editorial and refereeing processes also contributed to the article's accuracy as did the links to other expert sources e.g. the journal.

*CURRENCY:*

The journal was published in December 2005, while the article was accepted for publication as a research in December 2003. The research it describes was current and the article cites up-to-date references in the body of the text (1996-2005). Therefore the article is current.

*RELEVANCE:*

This was an academic journal on an academic database, which has high credibility in an academic context. It was written to inform researchers and students rather than to entertain or advertise. It would be relevant to both these groups but particularly any academic interested in nursing innovations and in health generally. It could be a difficult article to read and understand and therefore would be less relevant to first and second year nursing students.

*OBJECTIVITY:*

The information was objectively developed, well supported with a current research base and with all evidence acknowledged and referenced. There was no evidence of bias, a fact that was reinforced by the recognition that the article documents research, which followed the rigorous research processes, and the necessary ethical considerations demanded of such community-funded research. The article acknowledged the complexity of the issues discussed in a number of ways. For example, the literature review provided explanations of the key terms discussed (for example 'ethnicity' and 'nutrition') and supported their research decisions with references to the appropriate and relevant literature. The participants were clearly defined – a sample of 178 African Americans and would also be able to inform research conducted in other countries, for example indigenous people in Mexico.

*STABILITY:*

The article, with its source an academic journal on an academic data base is stable as a resource.

*ANALYSIS OF GRAPH*

These includes diet, physical activity, and energy balance to determine the combination of biological, behavioral and environmental factors that predispose certain population subgroups such as weight loss and difficulties in losing weight.

Environmental and social determinants of food intake and physical activities. Determine population secular trends in caloric and nutrient intake, energy expenditure of physical activity.

## CONCLUSION

This review has both summarized and critically reviewed the article 'Considerations for community-based research with African Americans'. The content, structure, strengths and limitations of the article were analyzed and critiqued. The article has contributed to the literature in terms of its valuable critique of current research study on African Americans and their health issues and the implications provided for both health interventions and future research collaborative possibilities.

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