Patterns of Caregiver’s Feeding Practices and Their Associated Characteristics Among Preschoolers

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Background

- Early childhood is a critical stage eating habits are shaped Obesity development starts
- Feeding practices (FP): modifiable behaviors that limit or facilitate the types and amount of food being offered to children
- Potential target for obesity prevention
- FPs need to be considered simultaneously
- Inconsistent measures to operationalize FP
- Mushers-Eizenmen (2007) categorized them into 12 FPs
- Vaughn (2016) conceptualized all FP into 3 broader constructs

Objectives

1. To examine how FPs are being practiced simultaneously by caregivers of preschoolers
2. To determine child, caregiver, and family characteristics associated with patterns of FPs

Methods

- Secondary data analysis on baseline data of a randomized controlled trial (CHAMP study)
- 437 caregivers (90% women) and preschoolers (55.6 boys)
- From 50 childcare centers through Maryland
- Caregivers answered questionnaires by online link set to them using Qualtrics system
  - Demographics, self reported weight and height
  - FPs: 48-item Comprehensive Feeding Practices Questionnaire (CFPQ)
  - Perception child size: Figure silhouettes of 4-year-old children
  - Child temperament [higher=difficult]: emotional and inhibitory control subscales of Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function

Statistical Models

1) Factor analysis to reduce CFPQ items to factors
2) Latent Profile analysis on the CFPQ factors to find patterns of FPs
3) Multinomial regressions in Structural equation frameworks
   - Bivariate and multivariate models
     o Child: sex*, race, age, temperament*
     o Caregiver: race, age*, education*, employment, perception of child size*, Body mass index (BMI)*
     o Family: marital status*, poverty level*, food insecurity*
   - Parsimonios model: * p<0.15 were included

Results

- Thirteen factors were identified
  - 9 similar to Mushers CFPQ factors
  - 4 new: Snacks and sweats in home; Teaching balance and nutrition; Limiting amount; Limiting Type
- Three patterns of FPs were found
  - Controlling (69%): coercive control, autonomy, structural
  - Regulating (16%): coercive control, moderate structural, autonomy
  - Balanced (15%): moderate in all practices
- FP classes were associated with
  - Caregivers were less likely to be in the Balanced vs. Controlling class if
    o Desired for child to be heavier (OR=0.40, 95%CI=0.22-0.72)
    o Were in higher poverty levels (OR=0.80, 95%CI=0.65-0.98)
    o Were Single (OR=0.38, 95%CI=0.18-0.80)
  - Unit in child temperament t-score caregivers were more likely to
    o Be in Balanced (OR=1.04, 95% CI=1.01-1.07) vs. Controlling class.
    o Be in Regulating (OR=1.04, 95% CI=1.01-1.08) vs. Controlling class.

Conclusions

Future work should evaluate if the patterns are stable over time, and how they associate with eating habits, child growth, and development.

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