

(Attention: Listening instruction)

Today we continue with our series of lectures on diet and society in the 21st century. We are all aware of the obesity epidemic facing our society, the reasons for this are well documented and are mainly due to poor eating habits coupled with too little exercise. In fact, a national health and nutrition survey here in the U.S concluded that the average total food intake increased considerably between the

This appears to be a general trend across most age groups, in fact, apart from the over 60s, all areas of American society are consistently above the dietary guidelines for caloric intake and saturated fat. However, **(Q31) total fat consumption is highest for teenagers**, and there is a clear correlation with fast food consumption.

Among the wide range of factors influencing an individual's dietary choices, one of the strongest influences is the home. (Q32) It will come as no surprise that within a family the fat intakes of husbands and wives, and parents and children who cohabit are remarkably similar.

Many people assume that this relationship indicates the influence of parents on their children, but we wanted to ask if children influence poor diets in adults. This hypothesis had not been tested in a national sample until now.

In our study we focused only on adults and we set our lower age limit at 17 and the upper one at 65. The key variable was the presence or absence of children, so we identified only those adults whose children were under 17. (Q33) Other variables included the age of the adult, level of education they had reached, their ethnic background, their income and foreign born

status.

To obtain our data first we conducted interviews in the respondents own homes, and, all and all we interviewed 6600 adults aged over 17, (Q34) then we invited them to mobile examination centers where surveys were conducted. From this information we were able to focus not only on the total fat intake but also on the person's total caloric consumption.

Our results showed that the presence of children led to significantly higher levels of both fat consumption and saturated fat in adults. We found on average that adults with children in the home ate 4.9 grams per day a fat more than adults without children, this result is consistent irrespective of race, gender or age.

The foods more commonly were convenience

items high in fat or sugar including pizza, salty snacks and ice cream. (Q35) Interestingly there is a significantly higher percentage of adults in this group who drink milk.

There are many explanations for this increased fat intake, (Q36) hectic schedules where parents try to balance work, family and leisure put time at a premium, another issue is children's preference for fatty foods or food with high sugar content. Fast foods and ready-to-eat foods are convenient choices, it is inconvenient to prepare different meals for both the children and the parents, so, it is likely that adults consume the same as their children.

Of course there were limitations to our study, one of these is that (Q37) we did not take into account the number of minors in each household, which could have an effect on the adult who feeds the children. In addition, (Q38) this study does not take into account the relationship of the adult to the minor. We could also postulate that the older a child gets, the more independent he or she becomes and so, (Q39) the influence a child has on an adult may lessen depending on the age of the child.

In terms of recommendations as a result of this study, we would like to see more research conducted to overcome the limitations outlined earlier. (Q40) We also feel there is a need for even further research into the influence that friends can have on our fat intake, given the

clear link we've have established between
family members.