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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the effects of family social capital, community social capital and collective efficacy on childhood overweight, employing logistic regression models. Using data from the Child Development Supplement and the 2000 U.S. Census, we find that both parent-child involvement in activities and parental enforcement of rules reduce the odds of childhood overweight, controlling for family and child characteristics. We also find that high levels of community social capital and collective efficacy reduce the odds of childhood overweight, controlling for community, family and child characteristics. These findings suggest that interventions of childhood overweight should target social processes in children’s environments.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Jean Kayitsinga is a sociologist demographer for the Julian Samora Research Institute at Michigan State University (MSU). He received his Ph.D. in sociology from MSU in 1999. His areas of specialization include rural sociology, sociology of families, demography, research methods, and statistical methodologies.

Dr. Rubén Martinez is Director of the JSRI at MSU. He is a nationally known scholar with expertise in the areas of higher education, race, and ethnic relations and diversity leadership. His areas of specialization include leadership and institutional change, education and ethnic minorities, youth development, and environmental justice.

Dr. Francisco F. Villarruel is a University Outreach Fellow and a Professor of Family and Child Ecology at MSU and a senior research associate with the Institute for Children, Youth, and Families and with the MSU’s Latino research institute—JSRI. Villarruel’s research focus is generalized into three areas as: Latino youth and families, positive youth development, and developmental contextualism.