

# Obesity, On the Rise

HEA 356: Health Promotion Programming Photovoice Research Project – Fall Semester 2016  
Karley Wray & Melissa Godby; Under the supervision of Dr. Miranda Sue Terry, Assistant Professor  
Department of Applied Health Sciences, Murray State University

## The Problem:

The problem that we have found on campus was obesity. Obesity is becoming a major topic that we need for focus on.

- Kentucky was just named the fifth obese state in the U.S. This is a big deal considering how few people Kentucky has compared to other states.
- Obesity is caused by people not eating healthy and not getting the amount of exercise that they need.
- People need to get their recommended nutritional guidelines and 150 minutes of exercise a week.
- This is a difficult thing to do while on a college campus.

Obesity doesn't just effect adults. People are starting to become obese at a younger age, and a greater amount of children are being effected.

This is a public and community health concern because obesity and cause serious health complications. Obesity can cause heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure. If more people are becoming obese that will end up meaning that more people will have to go to the doctor for chronic illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes. This will make medical bills and insurance rates increase.

## Research Methodology:

Photovoice is

- “a participatory research strategy commonly implemented in health research as a mechanism for personal and community change” (Kurantani & Lai, 2011).
- “a process by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through specific photographic technique” (Wang & Burris, 1997).
- “an empowering methodology that allows individuals to reflect upon strengths and concerns of their community” (Kurantani & Lai, 2011)

## Photovoice Pictures and Descriptions:



The picture on the left is of one of our many elevators on campus. It shows a student choosing to take the elevator over the stairs. This is a barrier that the campus has against obesity, but it provides students with the convenience of getting to class quicker.

The photo on the right is of a bike rack on campus. This is an asset of obesity on campus. This gives the students a choice to be healthy and ride a bike to class. They have the option to be healthy because they know they have somewhere to keep their bike safe while they are in class.



The picture to the left is of the wellness center on campus. This is an asset that the students have to combat obesity. Students can exercise at the wellness center for free with their student ID. This can encourage students to get their recommended minutes of exercise that they need in a week.

## Resources Available:

There are community resources to overcome obesity on campus and in the community like:

- Wellness Center on campus
- Walking trails on campus and in the community
- Healthy food options in the dinning hall
- Murray Calloway County Hospital Center for Health and Wellness
- Farmers' Market

## Conclusions & Recommendations:

The freshman 15 is not just for freshman anymore. College students of all ages are gaining more weight during the semester.

- A good recommendation would be that all majors are required to take a personal health class their freshman year or before they graduate.
  - This class provides students with the knowledge of nutritional needs and safe ways to exercise. It also informs students about things that can happen to your body if you do not take care of it.
  - This is useful information that every student should know.
- Another recommendation could be to offer cheaper meal plans. Some students cannot afford meal plans; therefore, they result to fast food that is in Murray. This is not good for obesity or their nutritional status. Fast food is cheap and tasty but not good for students health, whereas they can find healthy options in the dining halls.

## References:

- Doyle, E. I., Ward, S. E., & Oomen-Early, J. (2010). *The Process of Community Health Education and Promotion* (2nd ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.
- Kentucky. (n.d.). Retrieved September 07, 2016, from <http://stateofobesity.org/states/ky/>
- Kurantani, D. L. G. & Lai, E. (2011). *Photovoice Literature Review*. Retrieved October 11, 2016 from University of Southern California, TEAM Lab Web site: <http://teamlab.usc.edu/Photovoice%20Literature%20Review%20%28FINAL%29.pdf>
- Wang, C. & Burris, M.A. (1997). Photovoice: Concept, Methodology, and Use for Participatory Needs Assessment. *Health Education & Behavior*, 24(3), 369-387.