Politics, Poverty and Hunger: The Population Health Impact

Jefferson School of Population Health
January 14, 2015

Mariana Chilton, PhD, MPH
Associate Professor

Director
Drexel University Center for Hunger-Free Communities
Overview

1. Definition of Food insecurity & Hunger
2. Child Poverty and Politics
3. Ending child poverty as a public health imperative
1968

Keeping America Stronger: The US Food Stamp Program

http://www.cbpp.org/foodstamp-video.htm
50 Years of SNAP & 40 Years of WIC

1974 - 2014

Nutrition Education
Healthy Food

Breastfeeding Support
Healthcare Referrals

Strengthening Families for 40 Years
Food Insecurity Definition

• Lack of access to enough food for an active and healthy life
Food Insecurity in the United States in 2013

Household Composition

- All Households: 14.3%
- Children < 18: 19.5%
- Children < 6: 20.9%
- Female-headed Households: 34.4%

Race & Ethnicity

- White: 10.6%
- Latino: 23.7%
- Black: 26.1%

HP 2020 Target

Coleman-Jensen, A. USDA ERS 2014
US Census: Philadelphia Children Living in Poverty
44,000 Children Under Age 6
Health & Social Impacts of Food Insecurity

- Food Insecure children suffer more health problems compared to food secure children
  - Poor development
  - Stomach aches, head aches, colds, ear infections
  - High hospitalization rates

- Food Insecure children suffer more psychosocial and behavioral problems
  - Aggression, hyperactivity, anxiety
  - Greater need for mental health services

- Food Insecure children have more trouble with learning and academic performance
Why focus on children 0-4?

CORE CONCEPTS IN THE SCIENCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Toxic Stress Damages Developing Brain Architecture

Typical neuron: many connections

Neuron damaged by toxic stress: fewer connections
Toxic Stress

• Strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity without adequate support
  – physical or emotional abuse / neglect
  – caregiver substance abuse or mental illness
  – exposure to violence
  – family economic hardship

• Brain architecture & organ systems
• Stress-related disease / cognitive impairment

(Shonkoff, 2012)
65,000 children & families
(6,500 in Philadelphia)
Federal Assistance Programs--monitored by

- Food Stamps (SNAP)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- Medicaid
- Housing Subsidies
- Energy Assistance

Health

- Food Insecurity
- Hospitalizations
- Child Wellbeing
- Maternal Depression
- Child Growth
- Child Development
Food Insecurity & Health Outcomes
Adjusted Odds Ratios*

Controlled for site, race, child age, caregiver age, marital status, education, birth weight, child breastfed

73% Increased risk for developmental concerns

*All differences p value <.0001
Economic hardship = poor health

Food Insecurity

Housing Insecurity

Energy Insecurity
Poverty as a Childhood Disease

By PERRI KLASS, M.D.

Poverty is an exam room familiar. From Bellevue Hospital in New York to the neighborhood health center in Boston where I used to work, poverty has filtered through many of my interactions with parents and their children.

I ask about sleeping arrangements. Mother, father, older child and new baby live in one bedroom that they’re renting in an apartment, worrying that if the baby cries too much, they’ll be asked to leave.

I encourage an overweight 9-year-old who loves karate, and his mother says, “We had to stop; too expensive.” I talk to a new mother who is going back to work too soon, leaving her baby with the cheapest sitter she can find.
THE POVERTY CLINIC

Can a stressful childhood make you a sick adult?

BY PAUL TOUGH

Monisha Sullivan first visited the Bayview Child Health Center a few days before Christmas, in 2008. Sixteen years old, she was an African-American teen-age mother who had grown up in the poorest and most violent neighborhood in San Francisco, Bayview-Hunters Point, a bleak collage of warehouses and one-story public-housing projects in the city's southeastern corner. Sullivan arrived at the clinic with ailments that the staff routinely observed in patients: strep throat, asthma, colds, and a weight problem. The clinic's medical director, Nadine Burke, examined Sullivan and prescribed the usual remedies—penicillin for her strep throat, ProAir for her asthma, and permethrin for her scabies—and at most clinics that would have been the end of the visit. But Burke, who founded the center in 2007, was having a crisis of confidence regarding her practice, and Sullivan was the kind of patient who made her feel particularly uneasy. Burke was diligently ticking off each box on the inner-city pediatrician's checklist, but Sullivan's problems appeared to transcend mere physical symptoms. She was depressed and listless, staring at the floor of the examination room and responding to Burke's questions in sullen monosyllables. She hated school, didn't like her foster mother, and seemed not to care one way or the other about her two-month-old daughter, Sari.

Burke is charismatic and friendly, and her palpable concern for her pa-

THE NEW YORKER, MARCH 31, 2011 25
Hunger in the Community
Ways Hospitals Can Help

Foreword by
Congressman James P. McGovern
U.S. Representative from the
Massachusetts 3rd Congressional District
Screener for Food Insecurity

• We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.
  – Was that often true, sometimes true, or never true for your household in the last 12 months?

• The food that we bought just didn’t last, and we didn’t have money to get more.
  – Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

Put this in the Electronic Medical Record, ask every family...
Evidence for Policy Solutions

- **Food Stamps (SNAP)**
  - improve child health and prevent food insecurity

- **WIC**
  - protects against underweight, and promotes child health and development

- **Energy Assistance**
  - protects against food insecurity and poor child health

- **Housing subsidies**
  - protect against underweight and promote child health and development
“Expert” Witnesses
Informing Policy Makers

Witnesses exhibit to show at the Russell Senate Building in Washington, D.C. May 4-8

5/4/2009

Set your CNN.com Edition: U.S. | World | Business | Health | Technology | Sports | Travel

Tough choices for America's hungry

June 5, 2008 | 11:31 PM

Video

Ending Childhood Hunger

Watch CBS Videos Online
July 9, 2014
War on Poverty Hearing | Budget Committee
Income & Benefits

• Non-Standard Work = food insecurity
  – Unstable incomes
  – Non-standard work hours
  • (Colemen Jensen, 2011)
When Families Earn More, then Lose Benefits, Child Hunger Increases

Earning More and Receiving Less 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SNAP</th>
<th>TANF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(p<0.003) (p<0.001) (p<0.001) (p<0.02)

Currently Receive | Lost Benefits
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of child well-being</th>
<th>Average ranking position (for all 6 dimensions)</th>
<th>Dimension 1</th>
<th>Dimension 2</th>
<th>Dimension 3</th>
<th>Dimension 4</th>
<th>Dimension 5</th>
<th>Dimension 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Child Wellbeing & Income inequality

Child wellbeing and income inequality in rich societies: ecological cross sectional study BMJ 2007; 335
Income inequality → Gini Index
Child food insecurity 2012
Map the Meal Gap
Wal-mart

- $466 billion in revenue for 2012
- Average Employee Wages = $8.81 per hour

2.8 Billion in public assistance to supplement those wages

Redeems $25-$30 billion in food stamps annually

US taxpayer money

US taxpayer money as profit
The Walmart PAC and Waltons favored House members who voted against raising the minimum wage.
Public health policies to decrease child poverty

• Good nutrition
• Supports for working families
  – Better Wages
  – Access to quality childcare
  – Paid family/sick leave
• Adequate public assistance that promotes health
On the horizon...
Taking Action - Philadelphia

- Mayoral and City Council Elections in 2015

- Pope Francis visit in Fall

Demand plan to end child poverty
Taking Action - Pennsylvania

• New Governor for Pennsylvania

Lift SNAP & TANF asset limits to promote economic security
Taking Action – United States

- Congress
  - Child Nutrition Reauthorization

Improve Child Nutrition Programs
“WIC to SIX”