

Tulane University

Prevention Research in a Rebuilding Community

Addressing the physical and social environmental factors underlying the obesity epidemic

Rebuilding Healthy Neighborhoods for Children and Families in New Orleans

Investigators: Thomas Farley, MD, MPH
Traci Hong, PhD
Funding Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Award #053855)

This survey and advocacy project seeks to incorporate health promotion into the rebuilding of New Orleans. The project survey captured resident priorities for rebuilding neighborhoods. Results cited these top priorities in neighborhood rebuilding:

- ◇ Low crime
- ◇ Good street lighting
- ◇ Sidewalks and crosswalks
- ◇ Trees and greenery
- ◇ Parks and playgrounds
- ◇ Little car traffic
- ◇ Absence of litter
- ◇ Bus or street car lines
- ◇ Neighborhood grocery stores



A companion brochure demonstrated "What Makes a Neighborhood Healthy" with a visual diagram of what that neighborhood could look like in New Orleans.



prevention research center

Core Research Project Partnership for an Active Community Environment

Principal Investigator: Jeannette Gustat, PhD., MPH
Program Manager: Kathryn M. Parker, MPH



Goals include:

- ◇ Identify and address barriers to physical activity in a defined, low-income New Orleans neighborhood.
- ◇ Train a team of lay health advisors to develop appropriate local projects to improve health.
- ◇ Implement at least one neighborhood-wide physical environmental change.
- ◇ Assess the impact of the changes on the physical activity of community members.

Status of the project:

- ◇ Delayed one year, due to the affects of Hurricane Katrina.
- ◇ Baseline survey and physical activity observations have been completed.
- ◇ Intervention will be designated soon.



The Prevention Research Center at Tulane University is a member of the Prevention Research Centers Program, supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cooperative agreement #U48 DP000047.

Head-off Environmental Asthma in Louisiana

Principal Investigators: Maureen Lichtveld, MD, MPH
LuAnn White, PhD, DABT
Funding Source: National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences/
National Institutes of Health

Conducted in conjunction with the New Orleans Department of Health, the purpose of the HEAL project is to learn about the effects of mold and other indoor allergens on children with asthma in post-Katrina New Orleans.

The study will:

- ◇ evaluate the effectiveness of a novel asthma case management intervention on children ages 4 - 12;
- ◇ emphasize environmental risk control;
- ◇ test the hypothesis that morbidity can be reduced among children with moderate to severe asthma;
- ◇ and will use an enhanced Asthma Counselor program that provides both asthma case management and guidance for addressing environmental exposures.



ACTION!

Principal Investigator: Larry S. Webber, PhD
Co-Investigators: Carolyn Joyhnsen, PhD
Janet Rice, PhD
Donald (Diego) Rose, PhD, MPH, RD
Funding Source: National Institutes of Health

- ◇ Action is a worksite intervention to promote increased physical activity and healthier eating behavior.
- ◇ The worksites are public elementary schools in Jefferson Parish.
- ◇ The study will include about 600 adults, primarily White and African-American individuals 18 years of age and older from varied socioeconomic backgrounds.

The Impact of Food Availability on Diet

Principal Investigator: Diego Rose, PhD, MPH, RD

Neighborhood Food Availability, Consumer Economics, and Sentinel Food Consumption

Funding Source: National Institutes of Health/National Cancer Institute

- ◇ Secondary data analysis focuses on urban southeast Louisiana.
- ◇ GIS-calculated distance and density measures consider not only access to stores of different types, but also shelf space.
- ◇ Project will determine whether the availability of *fruits and vegetables* and *calorie-dense snack foods* at the neighborhood level are associated with consumption of these foods by individuals.



New Orleans Food Access and Consumption Study

Funding Source: USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service/National Research Initiative

- ◇ Focus is specifically on the City of New Orleans.
- ◇ Store availability measures will be density-based rather than distance-based.
- ◇ The project will develop indicators that describe and rank neighborhoods on their food availability and access for use in planning of interventions.

In a separate effort, the PRC is also working to develop a Food Policy Advisory Committee, authorized by the New Orleans City Council, that would study the issue of food access and make concrete recommendations to address it.

The Schoolyard Project

Principal Investigator: Tom Farley, MD, MPH

Through the efforts of this project, a schoolyard remained open on weekday afternoons and Saturdays. Before the project began, the schoolyard was locked when school was not in session. Results of the intervention were compared to a control schoolyard, that remained fenced and locked outside of class time.

Results of the 3-year pilot project found:

- ◇ 66% of the children observed in the schoolyard were "walking" or "very active."
- ◇ Over the entire follow-up period, there were 84% more children observed outdoors and physically active in the intervention neighborhood (including the schoolyard) than in the control neighborhood.
- ◇ Surveys suggest that children in the intervention neighborhood reduced their level of watching television and doing other sedentary activities.



These results suggest that rather than displacing activity that would have taken place elsewhere, availability of a safe play space may actually have increased play in the surrounding neighborhood.

The Prevention Research Center has just begun a new study to compare activity levels on schoolyards where the non-profit group KaBoom is installing brand new play structures.