BACKGROUND

- Adiposity in the US population is increasing, with over 64% of the adult population classified as being overweight or obese.
- Obesity is associated with a variety of chronic diseases, including metabolic diseases such as diabetes mellitus, high blood pressure, and dyslipidemia—all of which are major atherogenic coronary heart disease risk factors.
- Obesity and African Americans - African Americans have among the highest rates of being overweight or obese when compared with other groups within the US. About four out of five African American women are overweight or obese.
- From 2003–2006, African American women were 70% more likely to be obese than non-Hispanic white women.

Age-adjusted percentage of persons ≥20 years of age who are overweight or obese, 2003–2006 (Overweight = body mass index (BMI) ≥25) National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)

METHODS

STUDY DESIGN AND STUDY POPULATION

- The study to help improve early evaluation and management of risk factors leading to Diabetes (SHIELD) was a 5-year population-based survey conducted to better understand the risk for the development of diabetes mellitus, as well as its disease severity.
- The survey included 211,977 adults from 127,420 households (64% response rate), based upon a screening questionnaire mailed to 200,000 nationally representative households.
- In 2004, a baseline survey was used to find, 22,001 selected individuals derived from the screening respondents. Since 2004, SHIELD surveys captured self-reported information on health status, attitudes toward behaviors, quality of life and anthropometry from this representative sample of the US population.

This investigation is a cross-sectional analysis of the relation of ideal body image with race among SHIELD respondents to the 2007 survey (n = 15,844), which included the Figure Rating Scale.

STUDY MEASURES

- Body image was assessed using the Figure Rating Scale - Figure Rating Scale consists of two gender-specific scales that contain nine schematic figures of women and nine figures of men, ranging from underweight to obese.
- On the gender-specific scale, respondents selected a figure that most closely resembled the figure that “you feel best resembles the ‘ideal’ body type for optimal health” (ideal body image).

RESULTS

- More men than African American men were older, had type 2 diabetes mellitus or heart disease (p<0.001). Fewer men than African American men had less education, lower income, and single-member household.
- Fewer women than African American women had lower household income and single-member household size (p<0.001). More women than African American women were older, had higher education, and had type 2 diabetes mellitus or heart disease (p<0.001).

- Among men, perception of ideal body image for optimal health was significantly different between races even after adjusting for education level and stage (Table 2) - African American men chose a thinner ideal body image than white men even after adjusting for age and education.

- Among women, race did not strongly influence the choice of ideal body image for their health even after adjusting for age and education.

LIMITATIONS

- Household panels, like the SHIELD study, tend to under-represent the very wealthy and very poor segments of the population and do not include military or institutionalized individuals.

CONCLUSIONS

- African American versus white and African American versus white women did not report clinically significant differences in their perception of body image ideal for optimal health, suggesting that such perceptions do not account for racial differences in body weight.
- Further research is needed to better understand the influence of body image perception on health behaviors such as physical activity and nutrition.
- Further research is also needed to better understand the influence of genetic and cultural differences on health behaviors such as physical activity and nutrition.

REFERENCES


ABBREVIATIONS

BMI: body mass index
CDC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
NHANES: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey
SHIELD: Study to Help Improve Early Evaluation and management of risk factors Leading to Diabetes
US: United States of America