

# Latino Children's Health: Understanding Chronic Disease Risks Beyond Parental Influence

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## Background

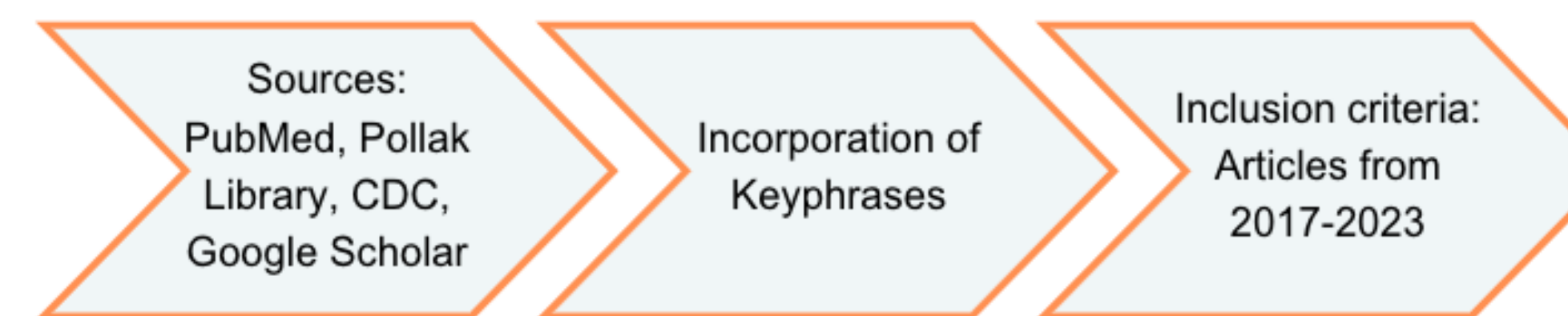
- Nutrition is fundamental to Latino communities' health, reflecting cultural practices and dietary traditions centered around fresh, whole foods and communal eating experiences.
- Despite comprising 16% of the U.S. population, Latinos/Hispanics face rising obesity rates, particularly among children (26.2%) and adults (45.6%) (CDC, 2022).
- More than 2 in 7 Hispanic boys (28.1%) and nearly 1 in 4 Hispanic girls (23.0%) have obesity (NHANES, 2023).
- More than 2 in 7 Mexican American boys (29.2%) and 1 in 4 Mexican American girls (24.9%) have obesity (NHANES, 2023).
- The Latino population experiences higher rates of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, with the second-highest rate of diagnosed diabetes (12.5%) (American Diabetes Association, 2020).
- Socioeconomic factors such as limited access to affordable nutritious foods, language barriers, and disparities in healthcare access exacerbate health challenges in Latino communities (Taverno, R et al., 2018).
- The prevalence of food insecurity in households with children under 6 was higher (15.3%) than the national average for all US households (Garcia Varela et al., 2023).

## Purpose

- Investigate the influence of cultural values, gender roles, and socioeconomic factors on health behaviors among Latino children, including dietary habits, physical activity levels, and healthcare access.
- Examine the long-term health implications, such as obesity prevalence and chronic disease incidence, within Latino communities.
- Identify effective components of interventions targeting health disparities and promoting positive health behaviors among Latino children.

## Methods

- A literature review was conducted from February 16th to February 27th using PubMed, Pollak Library, CDC, and Google Scholar.
- Key phrases searched: "Latino children's health," "parental influence," "obesity prevalence," "cultural values", "gender roles", "socioeconomic factors", "physical activity", and "nutrition".
- Inclusion criteria: Articles published within the last 7 years (2017-2023).



## Preliminary Findings

### Daycare Environment

- Daycare settings, particularly family child care homes (FCCHs), shape the health behaviors of Latino children during their formative years (Lindsay et al., 2018).
- FCCHs face notable challenges such as financial limitations and spatial constraints (Lindsay et al., 2018).
- Providers in FCCHs need more training to teach kids healthy habits (Lindsay et al., 2018).
- To keep kids healthy, providers limit screen time and find ways to encourage exercise despite space limits (Lindsay et al., 2018).

### Safety Concerns

- Fear of crime and limited safe recreational spaces impact physical activity levels among Latino children (Penilla, C et al., 2017).
- These factors are influenced by age, gender, and parental supervision practices.

### Conflicting Schedules

- Parents' work schedules & children's school commitments lead to irregular meal times (O'Connor, T et al., 2020).
- Variations in meal patterns & dietary choices emerge, affecting nutrition intake.
- Balancing work & family responsibilities adds stress, straining family relationships (O'Connor, T et al., 2020).

### Financial Constraint

- Financial constraints lead to food insecurity, impacting dietary choices.
- Some families opt for low-cost, high-calorie foods, while others prioritize healthier options (Taverno, R et al., 2018).
- Varied coping strategies highlight resilience within the community.

## Conclusion

Advocate for targeted interventions and policies aimed at promoting positive, long-term health outcomes among urban Latino children, focusing on:

- Improving access to nutritious foods.
- Enhancing opportunities for physical activity.
- Addressing social determinants of health, such as housing stability and access to healthcare services.

Future Research Directions:

- Explore tailored dietary education and promotion methods.
- Investigate innovative strategies to increase physical activity levels.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of culturally sensitive community-based programs.
- Assess the role of community engagement in health promotion.
- Explore the influence of family dynamics and community networks on health behaviors.
- Develop and implement surveys to validate trans-generational health impact dynamics in Latino communities.

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## References

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