

Student X

ESL 85E

28 April 2018

Mr. Lankford

Who Is Responsible for The Obesity Epidemic?

Obesity has become a common issue in the United States. There are arguments about who is responsible for the obesity epidemic. Some people think that the government is accountable because they should provide health care and make policies to restrain the development of obesity. Nevertheless, obesity is a matter of personal reasonability and parents are also culpable for the children's obesity.

Obesity is a matter of personal responsibility. First, the lifestyle is one of the factors that cause obesity. Because people are busy working, they tend to eat fast food and sugary drinks instead of making meals at home. Those foods contain a great deal of carbohydrates, which is one of the main causes of obesity. Furthermore, Americans also like to eat snacks like potato chips, chocolate, which contain large amount of artificial fat and sugar that could result in weight gain. Secondly, lack of exercise is another factor that causes obesity. In fact, "There are a number of areas of activity that we describe in our report that are virtually free, to anyone...walking, for example, is by far the best exercise for all humans. It is virtually free everywhere. (But) people don't do it" (Kirkey). Many people like to stay at home, watch TVs and play with their phones and computers in the spare time. Americans have already taken too much fat and sugar in their daily lives, yet they could easily take control of their health by doing the activities that are free everywhere. They simply lack responsibility for themselves.

Besides personal responsibility, parents' involvement is responsible for the childhood obesity. First, parents provide an environment for their kids to develop their lifestyles. For example, in the old days, children liked to play many kinds of games and sports with their peers on the playground, in the park or sandlot. Those activities are helpful for the kids to consume the extra energy in their bodies. As technology develops, lots of parents buy electronical devices—video games, computers and phones—for their kids to play so that they will be "well behaved" under the adult supervision. As result, children have become less active which is a cause of childhood obesity. Second, parents nowadays do not allow their kids to walk to school or ride bicycles without adult supervision. For instance, when I was in elementary school, there were no buses so we had to walk to school. The journey to school was filled with fun and walking is virtually one of the greatest ways for kids to exercise. Now "helicopter parents" tend to ask their kids to take the buses to school since they think it would be safer and their kids wouldn't be late for school. Lastly, parents are the models to their kids. In fact, "The average child watches 25 hours of television per week; parents, nearly 35 hours" (Werner). Children tend to have the same habits as their parents. Nowadays, most parents have reduced their outdoor activities because they are busy working, and they are "too tired" to spend time with their kids for exercises. Thus, watching television has become their main entertainment as well as the children.

Some people think that government should take the responsibility for the obesity epidemic. First, they reckon that government is culpable to provide health care for the obese. However, "...severe obesity is 'virtually irreversible,' available treatments have minimal benefit, bariatric surgery can cause 'significant psychological problems,' including an increased risk of suicide, and, at some point, people have to take same responsibility for their own situation"

(Kirkey). Government has already spent billions of tax dollars for the treatments of obesity, yet the treatments haven't had much significant implications on the patients. In addition, the treatments could cause other health problems, such as mental illness. Second, they think that government should establish policies to control the obesity epidemic. In fact, government have legislated higher taxes on sugary drinks and set up fast food free zones near schools (Werner). Nevertheless, "extra five or 10 cents per soda, or an extra five minutes to the nearest fast food joint is not going to change anyone's eating habits" (Werner). Clearly, the government has done their best to help the obese. However, the underlying factor that causes the obesity is the eaters' dietary habits. Medicine could only cure the symptoms, not the eaters' habits.

In conclusion, although government has provided health care and established policies to restrain the development of obesity, there hasn't had much significant implications. On the other hand, obesity is a matter of personal responsibility because personal lifestyle and lacking exercise are the main causes of obesity. Furthermore, parents create the environment for their kids to grow and they are the models to their children, so parents' involvement is also culpable for childhood obesity. If people could start to pay more attention to their diet and increase the physical exercises, the obesity can be prevented.

Works Cited

Werner, Doug. "Battling Childhood Obesity." *USA Today (Farmingdale)*, Jul, 2017, pp. 62. *SIRS Issues Researcher*, <https://sks.sirs.com>.

Kirkey, Sharon. "Obese Not to Blame, Says New Report." *Province*, 25 Apr, 2017, pp. A.14. *SIRS Issues Researcher*, <https://sks.sirs.com>.