

Food Deserts: The Key to Health is Wealth

Ayden Lawrence II J.D. Clement Early College

Research Question:

How are food deserts causing a rise in obesity and other health issues in low income communities?

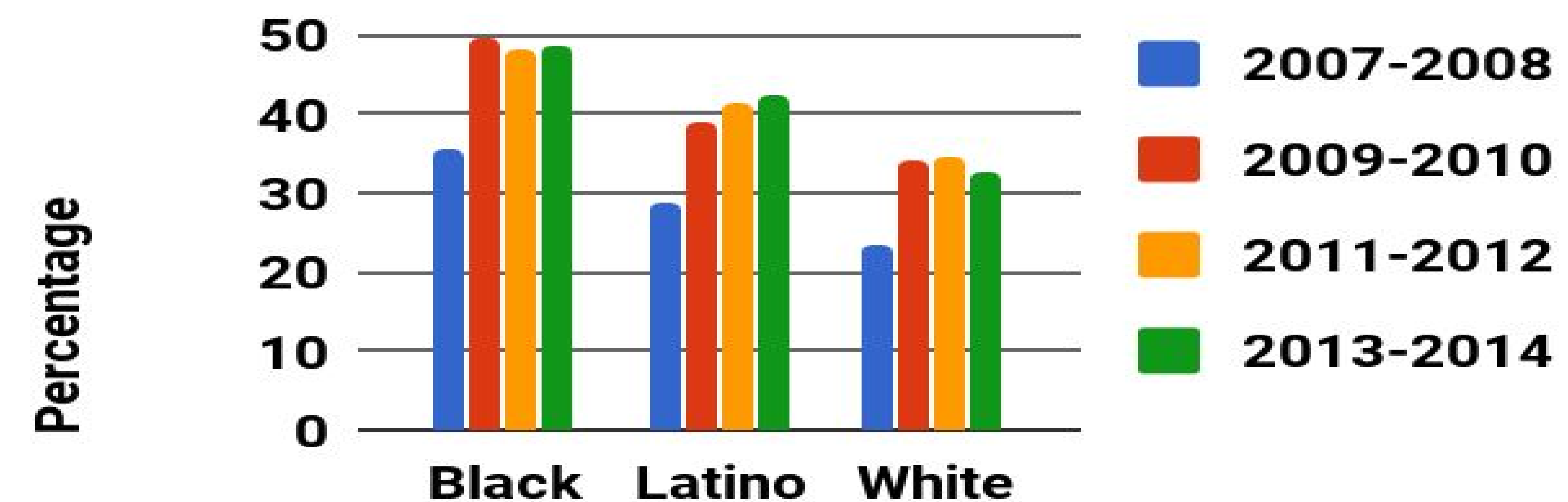
Introduction

A food desert has been defined by the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) as "a low income census tract where a substantial number or share of residents has low access to a supermarket or large grocery store." The lack of access to healthy foods in low income communities is forcing families to eat junk food full of saturated fats and sugars. Food deserts are causing the rise in Obesity, Heart Disease, Type 2 Diabetes and other health issues in poor communities. In the U.S., the African-American population makes up 13% of the population, and of that 13%, 47.8% have been diagnosed with obesity.

Methodology

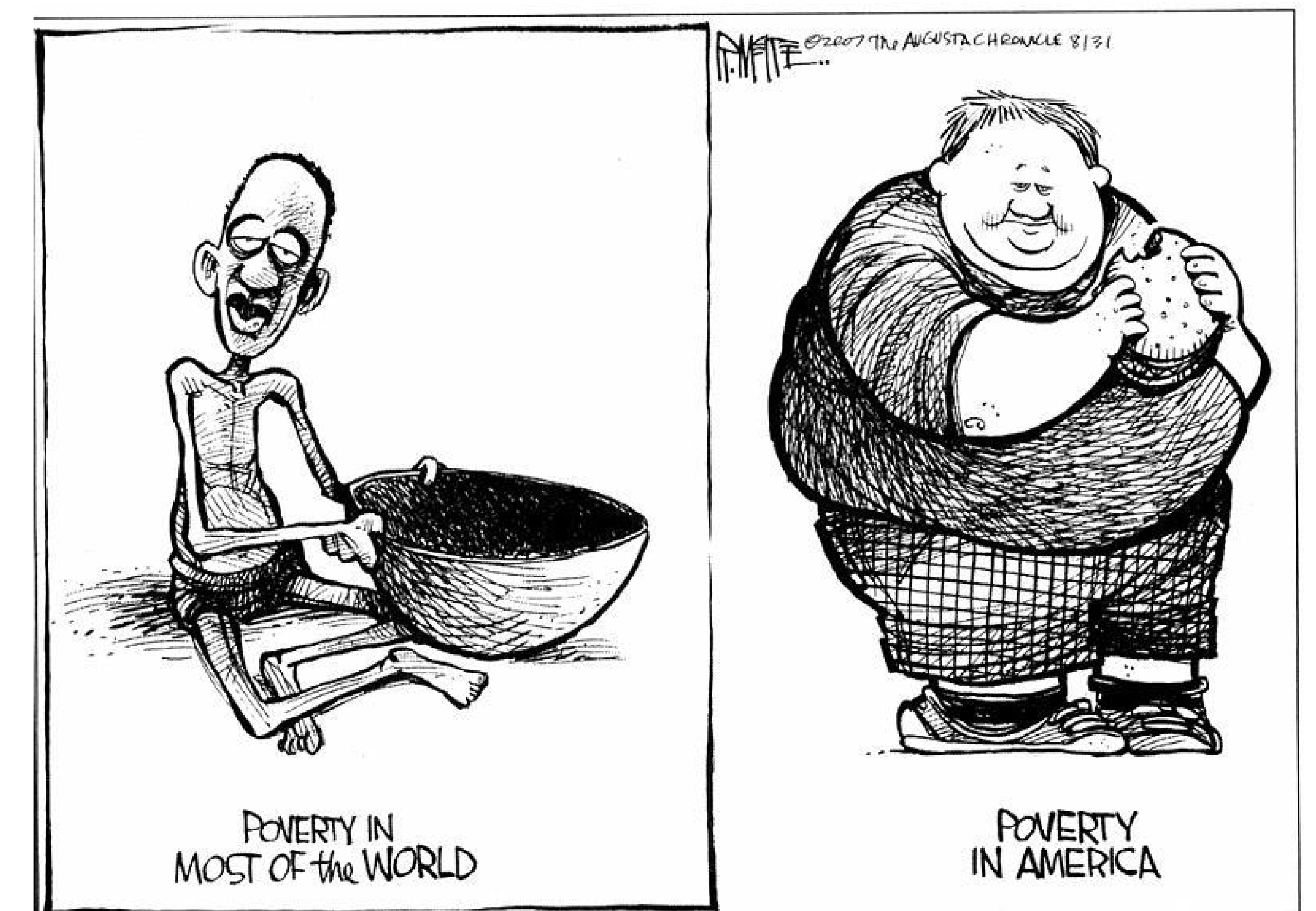
I found research articles related to food deserts and obesity in the Duke Library. After finding articles in the Duke Library I had to analyze them to pull all of the valuable information. I later had to synthesize the information from the articles that I read to how they are related to each other. For my graph I found my information online sources

Obesity Rates Between Race in the Last 8 Years



Findings

- Approximately 2.3 million people (2.2% of all US households) live in low-income, rural areas that are more than 10 miles from a supermarket.
- People living in the poorest socioeconomic status areas have 2.5 times the exposure to fast-food restaurants as those living in the wealthiest areas.
- Fast food restaurants serve high calorie, high fat foods, major contributors to our nation's obesity epidemic.
- Death rate as a result of diabetes in food deserts was twice as high as the diabetes death rate in areas with access to large grocery stores
- An estimated 23.5 million people U.S live in a food desert
- Men living in a food desert making less than 15,000 per year have twice the risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes compared to wealthy men.
- Children living under the federal household poverty level have a 2.7 times higher obesity rate than children that live in households that exceeds 400 percent the federal household poverty.



Conclusion

A solution that I have discovered while researching is that the local government should open more full service grocery stores in impoverished areas. I would like to further my research in comparing food deserts to food swamps and they related to each other. In the following year I wish to figure out how they started and to further my research by finding how does the government deal with these issues.