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Canada: Obesity

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Obesity in Canada

Background:

Canada is located in the northernmost part of North America above the United States. The Atlantic Ocean borders Canada to the East, the Pacific Ocean borders it to the West, and the Arctic Ocean borders it to the North.

Canada's population is around 36.8 million, and the median age is 40.7 years old. The ethnic origins of the population are European (77%), Asian (14%), Aboriginal (4%), Black (3%), Latin American (1%), and multi-racial (0.5%). Of this population, the religious beliefs are Christian (77%), no religion (16.5%), and Muslim (2%) (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017).

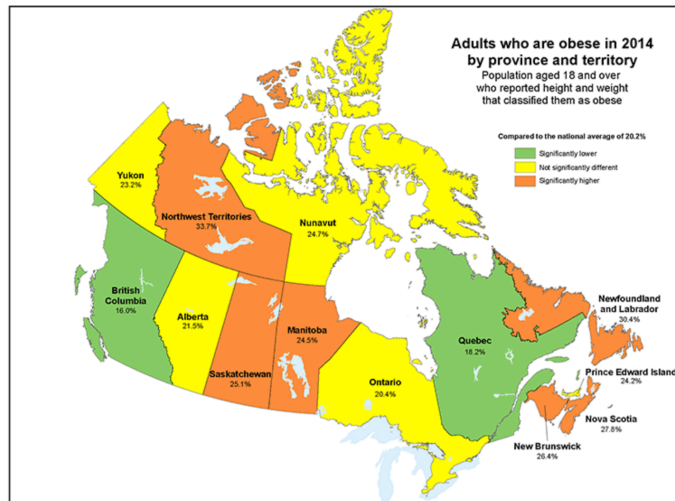
Canada's political structure is a federal parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy. Queen Elizabeth II is the head of state, Julie Payette is the Governor General, Justin Trudeau is the Prime Minister, and Richard Wagner is the Chief Justice. Canada also has a House of Commons (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017).

Some of Canada's major struggles are mental illness, especially among teens, waits for medical care, their relation with the United States regarding the new President, and the increase of obesity in the population.

Public Health Issue:

Overall, Canada is a fairly healthy country with no major disease outbreaks or scarcity problems; however, obesity has risen in the population throughout the years (Gorber & Tremblay, 2010). Obesity can lead to diabetes, heart

Adults who are obese in 2014 by province or territory



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), 2014.

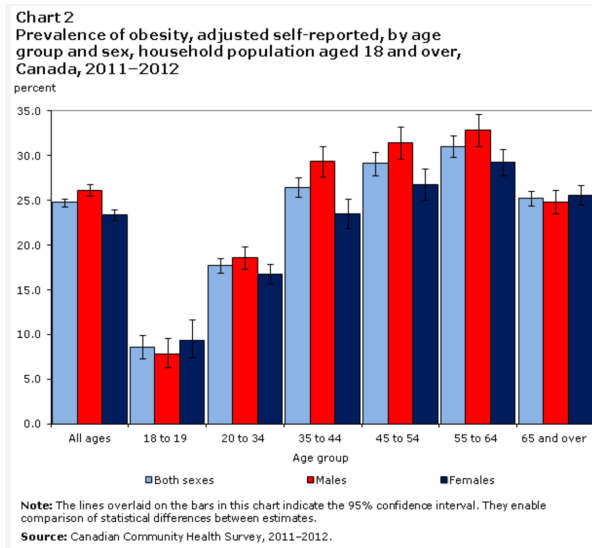
problems, and other medical problems (Jing et al., 2007). The figure to the left depicts the obesity severity in each province with green being least at risk and orange being most.

Basic Epidemiology: In 2014, Statistics Canada collected data regarding the obesity of its citizens. Obesity is categorized as having a BMI of over 30. The data collected regarded adults, people over 18 years old. In their data, they saw that men had a higher prevalence of obesity than women, 26.1% to 23.4%. Obesity has risen 17.9% for men and 16.8% for women since 2003 (Statistics Canada, 2015).

The data collected showed that as age increased obesity also increased.

By: Marissa Olson

People over the age of 35 have a greater chance of becoming obese than those below the age of 35. The prevalence of people who are obese over the age of 35 is roughly 30% and people below the age of 35 is roughly 15%. Childhood obesity has also increased in Canada from about 5% in 1978 to about 13% in 2013 (Navaneelan & Janz, 2014). Both the age and gender difference regarding obesity is demonstrated in the figure on the right.



to older populations having a higher chance of becoming obese. This intervention is beneficial for children, but the interventions for adults are lacking.

New Method: A new possible intervention is that Canada could implement health counseling programs to help those who are

obese. They could also place healthy vending machines at places to try and prevent junk food consumption which is a cause to obesity. These approaches are more social and could benefit the entire population, allowing for possible overall better health in Canada.

Interventions: Medical

interventions in relation to obesity are bariatric, or weight loss, surgery, which includes different techniques such as bypass surgery. Another medical intervention is anti-obesity, or weight loss, drugs (Kirkey, 2017). These interventions are useful for those people who have obesity that can afford and have coverage for them, but this is a small percentage of people with obesity, and they are not helpful interventions.

Another intervention that Canada has tried is healthier school lunches which affects children rather than adults. This intervention helps people when they are younger, but similar meal restrictions are not in place in adulthood which leads

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