

Health and Society Seminar Series



Social class, gender, and time use: Implications for the social determinants of body weight?

Lindsay McLaren

Wednesday, April 7, 2010
12:00 - 1:00 P.M

The Rose Room, 3E47
3rd Floor, TRW Building,
3280 Hospital Drive NW, Calgary

Background

The social gradient in body weight (for example, obesity) departs from the social gradient in other health outcomes. Innovative approaches are needed to understand the observed patterns. This study examines time-use patterns by indicators of socio-economic position, and considers the implications of variations in time use for the social gradient in weight reported in other studies.

Data and methods

The data are from respondents aged 25 to 64 to Canada's 1986 and 2005 General Social Surveys, which focused on time use. Participation in various activities was examined by sex, and by personal income and education, stratified by sex, in both years.

Results

Higher-income men and women were more likely than those of lower income to spend time in paid work, commuting and eating out, and less likely to spend time sleeping. Men and women with higher education were more likely than those with lower education to spend time in physical activity (2005 only) and reading. These time-use patterns plausibly contribute to the social gradient in obesity reported in other Canadian studies.

Interpretation

The findings suggest that there is value in looking beyond a narrow range of health behaviours toward broader measures of daily routines to gain insight into the social determinants of weight and health

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This Seminar Series is hosted by the Population Health Intervention Research Centre (www.ucalgary.ca/PHIRC). We'd like the seminars to reflect a range of perspectives and interests. Please contact Lindsay Bradshaw, at ph (403) 210 9316; or by email bradshaw@ucalgary.ca if you have any ideas or suggestions for future speakers.



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