

UrbanActionLab

Building a Healthier Codman Square

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In the early 1900s, Codman Square was a multi-religious neighborhood with a growing business district and bustling streets. Mixed-used buildings lined the streets with lively storefronts on the ground

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Research

Observational /Experimental Studies on Healthy Food Consumption

We have analyzed peer-reviewed studies that explore the efficacy of different health-based initiatives to craft effective policies that will improve health outcomes in the Codman Square community. Information from these studies and input from the BOLD Teens will guide our courses of action to promote healthy food consumption. This report focuses on three secondary sources and their corresponding studies.

The first source is from Mayne et al. and serves as a review of 37 experiments on diet and physical activity carried out between 2005 and 2013. Eighteen of these experiments focus on nutrition and diet, eight of which evaluate the effectiveness of nutrition labels in reducing high-calorie food consumption. Six of these eight studies found nutrition labeling to have no substantial impact on food purchasing. The ten remaining studies concluded that regulatory measures such as trans fat bans and decreased availability of sugary drinks effectively reduce caloric intake at restaurants and within schools. The studies regarding increased physical activity indicated that improving local infrastructure is the most effective intervention strategy. For example, schools with recently renovated playgrounds had higher rates of physical exertion among students than schools with dated recreation spaces. Furthermore, at the community level, constructing safe and functional bike lanes increased physical activity among residents.

The second study, at two Coles Supermarkets in Melbourne, collected quantitative data from shoppers to determine the efficacy of skill-building and price-reduction interventions. The study used four randomly assigned test groups, including a control group. They found that the skill-building intervention, which included education on the advantages of healthy food and goal-setting for increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, did not affect shoppers' buying

markets. Both demographics complained that farmer's markets are often too far away, not transparent about how their product is handled, and do not accept SNAP or other food vouchers.

Examples of Policies that Promote Healthy Food Consumption

The Urban Action team plans on collaborating with existing businesses and organizations to encourage their participation in our mission toward creating a healthier Codman Square. Codman Square is a unified and supportive community, so proper communication with the existing businesses has the potential to produce tremendous benefits. There are many vacant and desolate lots on the main street of the Codman Square business district which could be redeveloped into healthy restaurants.

The organizations that would have the most significant impact would be the two grocery stores. In 2015, a 16-week study called the Healthy Checkout Counter (HCC) was conducted in the Netherlands. The first half of the study was a control period, and the second half was an intervention period. Typically, candy, chocolate, and gum are displayed near check-out registers, so this study replaced unhealthy foods with more nutritious options, such as pre-packed snack tomatoes and nut and cereal bars. Of the intervention customers, 41% noticed the HCC and 80% were satisfied or very satisfied with the intervention. The supermarket headquarters placed the HCCs in the most disadvantaged areas within the four major cities in the Netherlands. The experiment had very positive results, which indicates its potential success in Codman Square. Pre-packed tomatoes may not be the most popular option in Codman Square, but a questionnaire could be distributed to determine the healthier options people prefer most. Healthy alternatives could include fruits, vegetables, Nutri-grain bars, protein bars, or even just a sugar-reduced version of the chocolates and candies already there. For example, the brand Unreal Snacks serves as a healthier alternative to Reese's.

The second study, the Kick The Can campaign, created policy changes beginning with education. The residents of California consumed soda at an extreme rate, so this campaign sought to educate them on its harmful effects using a database displaying the sugary drink policy. Researchers achieved four policy changes in the form of senate bills: sugary drinks out of CA K-12 schools (SB 677 and SB 965), milk and water as the default beverage options in restaurant kid's meals (SB 1192), the introduction of statewide soda tax bills (e.g., SB 1520), and the introduction of sugary drink warning label bills (e.g., SB 1000). These policies increased regulations of sugary beverages and advanced the movement to tax sugary drinks. John Snow Incorporated (JSI) is an organization whose mission is to improve the health of underserved communities. The Boston Foundation (TBF) is another organization that seeks to improve obesity prevention, social determinants of health, and stress. Collaboration with other organizations, such as these, is vital because their support and the data they

E ectiveness of Fast Food Bans

The Urban Action team reviewed a study done in the city of Los Angeles to evaluate if fast food

Wu, Michelle. Boston, Massachusetts. CBC 4-9 "Requiring City Departments and Vendors to Adopt Good Food Purchasing Standards" Filed January 7, 2019.