5-30-2017

Community Health News

Georgia Southern University

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In the USA, African American children residing in rural areas are disproportionately affected by childhood obesity. One strategy for preventing childhood obesity is helping caregivers to recognize their child is overweight or obese. The purpose of this study is to assess African American caregivers’ perceived level of their child’s obesity status and concordance between caregiver’s reported height and weight of their children compared to the objective measure of their child’s height and weight.

Caregivers completed a paper-based survey about perceptions of their child’s weight status including body silhouettes (n = 119) and self-reported their child’s body mass index status (n = 68). Children’s (n = 71) height and weight were objectively measured. Spearman rho and independent sample t tests were calculated to assess the relationship between caregiver’s self-reported and objective BMI status. Caregiver’s visually perceived their child’s weight status to be underweight; yet, self-reported that their child’s body mass index status was obese. The Spearman’s rho correlation indicated a significant relationship between caregiver’s self-reported and objective body mass index (r = .39, p < .001). The independent sample t test reflected that the mean self-reported body mass index and objective body mass index were statistically significant with calculated body mass index perception. The investigation of three different methods for assessing body mass index perceptions may contribute to the development of tailored programs and interventions that include counseling strategies that increase parental education about their child’s body mass index.


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