

Hear Our Voice: Insights from Children of Different Cultural Backgrounds Living in Low-Income Housing

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What Is the Purpose of this Study/Review?

- Hear Our Voice is a community-based study that included a partnership between the University of Wisconsin School of Human Ecology and Northport and Packer Community Learning Centers.
- In 2018 study planning and development began and was guided by the principal investigator, assistant director of the community learning center, and staff of the community learning centers. The community learning center staff led recruitment efforts for the study.
- The purpose of the study was to examine how children from different ethnic/racial backgrounds living in the same community frame the social and environmental factors that influence their physical and mental health.
- We used a Photovoice method which allowed children who may have trouble verbalizing their views about health and risk to articulate those views using photographs.

What Is the Problem?

- Poverty has a significant impact on a child's health. Children who experience poverty early in life or for an extended period of time are likely to develop asthma, obesity or other chronic diseases during their life time. Intervening early in the life of children living in poverty could change the health outcome of children. Thus, it is critical to identify early in a child's life the risk and protective factors that they perceive as contributors to their health.

What Are the Findings?

- Thirteen participants' ages 9 to 13 years took a total of 249 photographs.
- After review of the photographs and group discussions, the participants unanimously identified bullying as the number one threat to their health.
- The children also identified the following as the most important factors influencing their health: family support and behavior, nature, junk food, and public spaces.

Who Should Care Most?

- Parents and youth.
- School officials.
- Policy makers.
- Community leaders.



Recommendations for Action

- The results from this study will be used to advocate for more effective programs and interventions targeting the conditions or factors that children identify as important such as mental health issues arising from bullying.