

What's up with food and nutrition in 2010?

Food Politics by Dr. Marion Nestle - I wish I could read the leaves while I drink tea, but the best I can do is tell you which issues I'm going to be watching closely this year.



Hunter Public Relations recently asked 1,000 Americans which food-related issues they thought were most important in 2009.

The top three? Food safety, hunger and food prices. For the decade, the winner was childhood obesity.

I have my own top 10 list of hot-button issues for 2010, and here they are:

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State School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy Environments and Youth Obesity

American Journal of Preventive Medicine — Background

With the epidemic of childhood obesity, there is national interest in state-level school policies related to nutrition and physical activity, policies adopted by states, and relationships to youth obesity.



Purpose

This study develops a comprehensive state-level approach to characterize the overall obesity prevention policy environment for schools and links the policy environments to youth obesity for each state.

Methods

Using 2006 School Health Policies and Programs Study (SHPPS) state data, qualitative and quantitative methods were used (2008–2009) to construct domains of state-level school obesity prevention policies and practices, establish the validity and reliability of the domain scales, and examine their associations with state-level obesity prevalence among youth aged 10–17 years from the 2003 National Survey of Children's Health.

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Mobile Food Vending and the After-School Food Environment

American Journal of Preventive Medicine — Background

Low-income and minority children have higher rates of obesity and overweight. Greater understanding of their food access is important. Because of higher rates of walking to school in these populations, these children likely have greater exposure to the food environment immediately around their schools.

Mobile food vendors are an understudied aspect of the food environment in U.S. urban areas.



Purpose

This study aims to observe the after-school food environment in an urban area where mobile vending is known to occur in order to study the range of vendors encountered near schools and the items sold in the after-school period.

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Obesity May Hinder Optimal Control Of Blood Pressure And Cholesterol

ScienceDaily (Dec. 30, 2009) — Obese patients taking medications to lower their blood pressure and cholesterol levels are less likely to reach recommended targets for these cardiovascular disease risk factors than their normal weight counterparts, according to new research presented at the 2009 Canadian Cardiovascular Congress hosted by the Canadian Cardiovascular Society and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada.



Dr. Vineet Bhan, a resident at the University of Toronto, sought to determine whether there were differences in reaching guideline-recommended targets for blood pressure and cholesterol levels according to body mass index (BMI) in a large number of individuals deemed to be at high risk for heart disease and stroke.

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Addictive Effects of Caffeine on Kids Being Studied

ScienceDaily (Dec. 31, 2009) — Caffeine is a stimulant drug, although legal, and adults use it widely to perk themselves up: Being "addicted" to caffeine is considered perfectly normal.

But how strong is caffeine's appeal in young people who consume an abundance of soft drinks? What impact does acute and chronic caffeine consumption have on their blood pressure, heart rate and hand tremor?



Furthermore, does consuming caffeinated drinks during adolescence contribute to later use of legal or illicit drugs?

Jennifer L. Temple, PhD, a neurobiologist, assistant professor of exercise and nutrition sciences at the University at Buffalo and director of its Nutrition and Health Research Laboratory, is looking for answers to these three questions through a 4-year, \$800,000 study funded by the National Institutes of Health.

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Aerobic Exercise No Big Stretch For Older Adults But Helps Elasticity Of Arteries

ScienceDaily (Dec. 30, 2009) — Just three months of physical activity reaps heart health benefits for older adults with type 2 diabetes by improving the elasticity in their arteries -- reducing risk of heart disease and stroke, Dr. Kenneth Madden told the 2009 Canadian Cardiovascular Congress, co-hosted by the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Canadian Cardiovascular Society.

Dr. Madden studied adults between the ages of 65 to 83 with controlled Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and high blood cholesterol to see how increased activity might affect stiffness of the arteries.



"The theory is that aerobic activity makes your arteries less stiff and makes artery walls more elastic," says Dr. Madden, a geriatric specialist at the University of British Columbia.

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