

New research shows growing up in poor neighborhoods increases likelihood of obesity

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A new study from the University of Colorado Denver shows the length of time children and young adults live in poor neighborhoods is associated with obesity later in life.

CU Denver researcher Adam Lippert, an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology, finds that adolescents who grow up and consistently live in poor neighborhoods are more likely to become or remain obese in adulthood than their peers who live in more affluent areas. These patterns are more pronounced for young women.

Lippert's study was published this month in the *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*.

Lippert examined national survey data from students in grades seven through 12 that were followed over a period of 13 years. He sought to understand how the odds of becoming obese varied for young men and women as they entered, exited or consistently lived in poor neighborhoods during the transition to adulthood.

The study shows that when teens move out of low-income neighborhoods, their risk of obesity decreases, while moving into a [poor neighborhood](#) increases the risk. And consistently living in [poor areas](#) puts young people at greatest risk for becoming or remaining obese in the future.

This is one of a few recent studies to illustrate the [health](#) consequences

of residential inequalities in the U.S. Researchers hypothesize that the link between poverty and obesity is partially attributed to the lack of exercise amenities, healthy food sources and increased stress in low-income areas.

"The research demonstrates that the long-term residential experiences of teenagers can affect their life-long health," said Lippert. "It's encouraging to see that the risk of [obesity](#) can be curtailed by moving out of a low-income areas."

Lippert's results suggest that providing teenagers with resources to improve their residential circumstances as they enter adulthood can positively impact their life and health.

Provided by University of Colorado Denver

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