

UMSAEP UM-UWC Linkage Report
Obesogenicity of Rural and Urban Poverty in South Africa and the United States

Submitted by Lincoln Sheets
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Visit to Cape Town: November 30, 2018 to December 6, 2018
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Visit to Columbia: April 29, 2019 to May 3, 2019

1. Overview

In late 2018 and early 2019, I began collaborating with Professor Rina Swart of UWC to study social determinants of the global obesity epidemic. We have formed research collaborations with other MU and UWC researchers and with faculty from other universities and organizations, in order to continue our research in South Africa, the United States, and in several other countries.

2. Description of Linkage Activities

I visited UWC campus in person in November-December, 2018, in order to meet Professor Swart in person, brainstorm with her and other faculty at UWC, and begin designing feasible research projects in social determinants of global obesity. We began a study of obesity and underweight in lower-income countries that we published the following year, in collaboration with two other MU Medicine faculty. Presentation of those findings at an international conference in August, 2019, led to discussions with Dr. Theresa Cullen of Regenstrief Institute about combining our similar research interests. In the meanwhile, Professor Swart visited MU campus in April-May, 2019, to present our research findings to students at the MU Department of Health Management and Informatics, and to meet other MU faculty with similar research interests. Those meetings led to discussions with Dr. Sandy Rikoon of the MU College of Human Environmental Sciences about collaborating on research projects in South Africa.

3. Products from Linkage Activities

- Published paper: “Urban Disadvantage, Obesity, and Underweight in 31 Lower-Income Countries” by Sheets LR, Woldu HG, Swart R, Simoes EJ; published in *Studies in Health Technology and Informatics*, issue 264, pages 338-342.
- Conference presentation: “Urban Disadvantage, Obesity, and Underweight in 31 Lower-Income Countries” by Sheets LR, Woldu HG, Swart R, Simoes EJ; presented by Lincoln Sheets at the World Congress on Medical and Health Informatics (MedInfo) in Lyon, France, in August, 2019.

- Ongoing research collaboration: Rina Swart (UWC), Lincoln Sheets (MU), Sandy Rikoon (MU), and William McKelvey (MU) have begun work on a “South Africa Hunger Atlas” based on Dr. Rikoon’s and Dr. McKelvey’s previous “Missouri Hunger Atlas”.
- Ongoing research collaboration: Lincoln Sheets (MU), Rina Swart (UWC), Henok Woldu (MU), Theresa Cullen (Regenstrief Institute), and Masoud Vaezghasemi (Umeå Universitet) have begun work on “The Impact of Climate Change on Childhood Malnutrition in Lower-Income Countries”.

4. Summary

This linkage between MU and UWC faculty has already produced high-quality academic publications and continues to lead to further global research collaborations.