

Editorial Preface

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The *International Journal of Public and Private Perspectives on Healthcare, Culture, and the Environment (IJPPHCE)* is proud to present in this issue four articles, each providing fresh insights and ideas on the kaleidoscopic continually shifting relationships between healthcare, economy, society and culture.

In the first article of this issue, ‘Walk to Health: The Transtheoretical Model for Behavior Change Applied to Exercise’, Paula Miller and James O. Connelly demonstrate how walking can play a very important part in maintaining and improving health. Three simple ingredients can help prevent chronic, debilitating, and expensive health issues later in life: walking, a pedometer, and a personal goal to reach. Health risks associated with becoming sedentary include heart disease, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, obesity, and depression. In 2011, two out of three Americans were not physically active at the levels recommended to gain beneficial results. Even among university students, physical inactivity is prevalent and a major risk factor associated with medical illness. Students should consider a strategy with a plan intended to mitigate the discomfort of physical activity and improve the experience of exercise. The transtheoretical model used in this article focuses on the intent of students’ participation in a fitness program. This model is useful in explaining change in behavior over time and provides the theoretical framework for physical activity intervention research. Psychologists Prochaska and DiClemente first theorized the five stages of change in the transtheoretical model, namely, precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance. This study used a quasi-experimental research design with a convenience sample of university students from Southern California. The sample consisted of 137 volunteers recruited from master and bachelor courses. These students were assigned to two groups. Group A received instructions about the program with a pedometer and log sheet and told to focus on an exercise goal. Group B received the same material but without a goal. The two groups were compared on the transtheoretical model’s five stages of change. Exercises for strenuous, moderate, and mild activity were compared with the pretest and posttest from the Godden-Shephard Leisure-Time Physical Activity Questionnaire. Analyses indicated that a walking program inspired graduate and undergraduate students to self-monitor their progress. At pretest, there was no distribution of performance toward increasing exercise across the five stages of change for students. However, at posttest students in Group A with a goal were more likely to engage in mild and moderate exercise. This research focuses on the very basic issue of motivation to adopt healthier life-style. This study may serve as an inspiration to promote healthier life-styles in many other ways. This study identified ‘leadership’ and ‘learning environment’ as vital components in effective implementation of a such a program.

In the second article, ‘Addressing the Public Health Epidemic of Childhood Obesity Using Public Schools as a Health Education Learning Laboratories’, by Darrell Norman Burrell, Jorja B. Wright, Clishia Taylor, Tiffany Shockley, April Reaves, and Judith-Jolie Mairs, introduces the issue of childhood obesity and analyze the factors that cause this major health issue. Obesity is a global issue with significant health and social consequences. The prevalence of obesity in the US is 18.5% and affects about 13.7 million children and adolescents. Hispanics (25.8%) and non-Hispanic blacks

(22.0%) have a higher prevalence than non-Hispanic whites (14.1%). There is a correlation between childhood obesity and adult obesity, where children that are obese tend to grow to become obese adults. Furthermore, most of the world's population already lives in nations that are plagued with high death rates from overweight and obesity. Childhood obesity is influenced by genetics, high sugar consumption, unhealthy snack food, portion size, activity level, environment, socio-culture, family, and psychological factors. Physical activity plays a significant role in personal and preventative health in which exercising could reduce chronic diseases and premature mortality. Obesity has an even higher impact on low-income communities. In some cases, children lack adequate facilities and outdoor places to engage in exercises such as playing.

Another growing phenomenon is the high consumption of fast food rather than fresh food because fast food lacks proper nutrition and is loaded with unhealthy ingredients. An essential element is "where families live, work, play, and attend school; all have a major impact on the choices they are able to make". A significant amount of life and health foundations are developed in school. Teachers usually spend up to 8 hours a day around students, while parents might spend up to 4 hrs, and that includes time spent before and after school. This study illustrates how important it will be that the educators understand the gravity of this issue and develop strategies to effectively address the problem. Furthermore, the healthy behaviors are harder to influence as children get older and accustomed to an unhealthy lifestyle.

For the school system to be successful in overcoming child obesity, sustainability by parents and community will be the defining factor in creating a healthy future for our children. In short, this article sums up well the social foundations of childhood obesity and shows practical solutions and alternatives. A total of 116 journal articles were used for the development of this study; the articles were analyzed and selected based on the occurrence of the following keywords and phrases: (a) childhood obesity, (b) social cognition theory, (c) telemedicine, and (d) nutrition education. Using telemedicine video conferencing software and adding food gardens to public school curricula were identified among the most promising strategies that educators and policymakers can use to reduce the rate of childhood obesity.

In the third article, 'Necessary Prerequisites for Successful Green Economic Transition and Subsequent Green Development: An Exploratory Analysis and Appraisal', José G. Vargas-Hernández and Ian Warner analyze a strategic transformational transition of green economy, green growth and sustainable development from the institutional perspective. This includes investment, trade and capacity building requirements for the strategic policy formulation and implementation of a green economic development plan.

Given the increasingly urgent need to permanently forestall global climate catastrophe, there is a vital requirement for an adequately successful one-off transition to - and operation of - an authentic Green Economy in each of the world's disparate national polities. While concepts like 'green economic transition', 'Green Economy' and 'Green New Deal' are clear in themselves, the policies they denote are frequently insufficiently delineated. Meanwhile, less environmentally destructive economic thought and practices are unquestionably relevant to the ongoing debates that focus on how to simultaneously safeguard, maximize and optimize economic growth, social justice and environmental sustainability. The green economy is viewed by its architects and advocates as being a means and enabler of responsible development and is best conceived of as a balancing mechanism that, when successful, sensibly adjudicates between the twin vital needs of modern human population: namely the crucial needs of the advanced and increasingly transnationalized industrialized economy and those of the environment. As such, it is intended to supersede and replace ultimately unsustainable and thus no longer feasible or acceptable policy regimes that only did the former (often rather sub-optimally), not both. From this perspective, green economy plans must strive persuasively to show skeptical audiences how they will at once improve human well-being, lessen social and economic inequality, and reduce environmental risks and ecological challenges.

The concept of green economy is fundamentally an attempt to plan a technically feasible and politically viable transition to a suitably environmentally friendly and resource-efficient new reality in order to massively reduce environmental degradation and destruction, primarily via the vital drastic reduction of climate changing carbon emissions. Such a transition to a really green economy requires that green activities and investments in the interlinkages between rural and urban areas adequately contribute to green economic growth. Public and private funding of green economy measures must be carried out carefully but on a very large scale indeed at all institutional levels and in all sectors of the economy and be dedicated to the nurturing of climate-responsible green businesses that use or themselves develop appropriately green technologies.

Green economy transition strategy is centered on transformative actions introduced in response to economic, social and environmental challenges. A shift from the more traditional economy of today to a more resilient and green economic developmental regime done in the interests of species survival and long-term prosperity requires more effective natural and ecological resources management, democratic legitimacy and equitable distribution of benefits. In short, this article provides a balanced analysis about the political, social, economic and institutional basics of green economy transition strategies. It also provides insights on such issues as green growth and sustainability and what they really mean for different societies and for the green economy transition. This article builds linkages between different political and economic discourses and such linkages are important when economy transition strategies are designed for different societies and economies.

The fourth article of this issue, 'Effect of Economic Performance on Subjective Well-Being: A Multilevel Analysis for Latin America in 2016', by Jéssica Dávalos and José G. Vargas-Hernández, focuses on the relationship between economics, politics and subjective well-being in 17 different Latin American countries. Studies of Latin America regarding subjective well-being are scarce but these countries are particularly interesting for research purposes since they have many cultural similarities, and at the same time, they can show marked differences in terms of political and economic indicators. In the study, the chosen dependent variable was 'life satisfaction', which was used as a measure of subjective well-being. Among the findings were such pieces of data as married people being more satisfied with their lives than singles, and less so if they are widowed or separated. In relation to race, where the mestizos were the reference group there were no significant differences between the mestizos, whites, Asians and mulattos. However, the African-Americans, indigenous people and people belonging to the other races category were significantly less happy. Regarding education, illiterate people, people with complete secondary education, and individuals with incomplete, and complete higher education were happier than people with complete primary education. Also, the non-religious people in this research turned out to be statistically less happy than those who identified with a religion. On the other hand, there was a negative correlation with age, that is, at younger age people were found to be happier. People with employment had a greater satisfaction with life than those who did not have a job.

In relation to public debt, this research found that it generates a negative effect on subjective well-being. However, the three highest economic strata resulted with a positive interaction effect in areas of higher public debt. Integrity of government and fiscal burden were not particularly significant. However, they showed to have a moderating effect for the individual economic situation. People with difficulties to cover needs onward showed a stronger relationship with subjective well-being in areas of greater government integrity. While the same three highest social strata maintained a more superficial relationship with happiness in countries with higher tax burdens. Probably this could be explained by the fact that people who belong to the lowest strata are more likely to work in the informal economy, and therefore are not affected by tax increases.

Overall, economic conditions as well as the rule of law of a country predictably played a major influence on subjective well-being. However, the rich Latinobarometer survey data allowed to include more demographic variables such as race and educational level and, therefore, the study represents a multilevel analysis. Many of these demographic factors turned out to be very significant for subjective

well-being and more sensitive in terms of cultural differences. This multilevel study would be highly useful for further comparative studies in Latin America. Moreover, it would also provide insights for researchers focusing on other regions such as the ASEAN countries, the European Union or the African countries.

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