

How Do Friends Affect Adolescent Health and Behaviour?

Wencke Gwozdz (Copenhagen Business School)

- on behalf of the I.Family consortium -

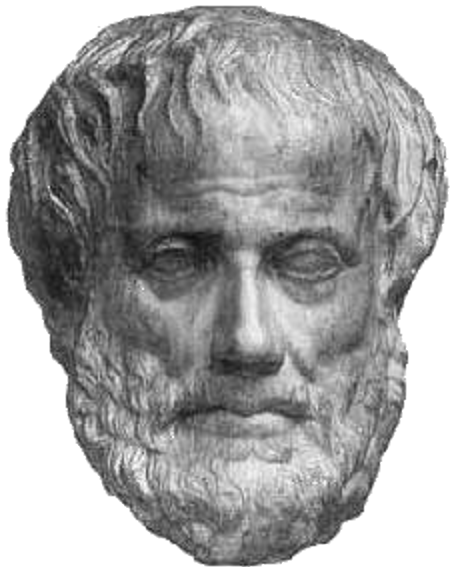


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Outline

- Background
- Our studies
- What we found
- Policy insights



“Man is by nature a social animal; an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than human. Society is something that precedes the individual. Anyone who either cannot lead the common life or is so self-sufficient as not to need to, and therefore does not partake of society, is either a beast or a god.”

Aristotle



Peer effects on a national level



- **Influence:**
Societal norms and values
- **Peer definition:**
By age, sex & country
- **Target group:**
15+ years
- **Data:**
European Social Survey 2014

Collectivistic
Individualistic

= groups are more important than the individual
= individuals is more important than groups



Peer effects on the school level



- **Influence:**
social & physical environment
- **Peer definition:**
By kindergarten/school
- **Target group:**
2-9 years
- **Data:**
IDEFICS Study



Peer effects on a friends level



- **Influence:**
Friends
- **Peer definition:**
By nominated friends
- **Target group:**
12-16 years
- **Data:**
I.Family Study



Focus of the individual studies



Weight



Diet



Physical activity





What we found: peers and weight



Peer's weight
& individual
weight:



Some details:

Stronger in
collectivistic
societies

Physical and
social environment
play a role

Strongest
relationship



What we found: peers and diet/physical activity

Diet:



Physical activity:



Some details:

- Friends have similar behaviours
- Only for unhealthy foods (sugar sweetened beverages, fatty foods or fast foods), healthy food consumption (e.g. vegetables & fruits) are not similar
- Leisure time activities and sedentary behaviour (television viewing)



Policy insights

- Tailor interventions towards the corresponding social norms and value systems

In collectivistic societies

SUPPORT YOUR FRIENDS' HEALTHY CHOICES!

Make a pact ahead of time not to drink.
Leave parties together if there's drinking.
Stand your ground— together.

Strength in Numbers

72% of ETHS students choose healthy options other than drinking when they're with their friends.

In individualistic societies

SUPER HEROES SUPER HEALTHY COOKBOOK

Good food kids can make themselves

By Mark Saltzman, Judy Garlan & Michele Grodner

With foreword by Dr. Joan Gussow

Policy insights

- Decrease unhealthy eating and sedentary behaviour collectively by using social norms



The Smarter Lunchroom Movement is brought to you by the Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Program and is funded by the USDA ERS/FNS

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Create a SNAC (Student Nutrition Action Committee) of students responsible for the naming of and creating signage for veggies



The odds are, a group of motivated students is savvy to what appeals to their peers than any adult is! Engage the student talent in your school to help make lunchroom changes that truly appeal to young people - and get free help to maintain your changes!

HOW TO DO IT:

Create a SNAC for your school. Give them a list of the most common vegetables served in your lunchroom and ask them to create age-appropriate names.

- Read this article on how to convene and utilize a SNAC (link to SNAC article - now in outline form only)

- Use our suggested lesson plan and materials (link to veggie naming lesson plan and worksheet - now in draft

form), or create your own

WHAT WILL IT COST:

- Time: 2-4 hours (to organize a 6-10 student SNAC and hold a renaming meeting)
- Money: \$0

OBJECTIVES: *Increasing the number of students that select vegetables*



- Thank you very much!