

The paper I am submitting for consideration for the Hannon Library Undergraduate Research Award was originally assigned to me by Dr. Hawley Almstedt in the Advanced Nutrition Course in the Fall of 2017. Over the course of the semester we were to research diligently and utilize academic journals and peer reviewed articles to delve deeper into the topic of our choosing. In the end, I utilized 20 sources, 14 of which were from peer reviewed journal articles.

My inspiration for my paper came from a documentary produced by Katie Couric I had seen that discussed the childhood obesity epidemic in the US. Using this as a kick start, I began with a basic Google Scholar search to begin to identify how much existing research there was surrounding my topic. When beginning research for a nutrition topic I knew that there are some specific academic journals that are good sources. So, I looked for research from specific journals (namely, *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* and *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*) and articles that have been cited by many other papers which shows validity. Knowing that I wanted to cover childhood obesity from a nutritional science perspective, I avoided sociology and psychology papers that might provide an observational but less scientific research driven perspective on the epidemic. I utilized statistics and demographics from the Center for Disease Control, Harvard's school of public health, and a piece from *Frontline*. I found that these sources provided me with good supporting data that I often found referenced in scientific journals, so I went directly to the sources to investigate. On sites that are not journal based, I find that if they are good sources they often cite their information, if it's from another journal article, so I would use their citations to find the original source.

After my initial demographic, statistic, and baseline research I decided to break my paper up into sections, creating a comprehensive review of the literature as it related to my specific

research question: what is the role of added sugar in the childhood obesity epidemic and how are public schools changing or coping with this issue? I wrote my introduction section last after I finished my others so I would know exactly what I needed to describe and introduce. The first section I wrote was my fourth section, “Intervention programs and efficacy.” I used research tools like *PubMed* and the LMU Library OneSearch function, limited to peer reviewed articles to search for intervention studies that related to my study. I used search words like “added sugar” AND “childhood obesity” AND “intervention,” to try and limit my results to related topics, a skill I learned freshman year when my biology 101 course had a day in the library learning how to utilize research tools. In the end, I decided on three papers that I found particularly well researched, executed, and had been cited several times by other papers. My goal for this section was not simply to describe these papers and studies but to compare and contrast them and relate them back to the larger picture and research question I developed.

The rest of the paper came together nicely including a background history section, a highly scientific discussion of the biochemistry of added sugars, and a brief window into the public health topic of school meal programs. I avoided all studies sponsored by companies or other potentially biased endeavors.

The largest strength of my paper is the ability to reach both a scientific audience and laymen without a science background. I use simple but precise language that describes in detail the problem, the potential source/history, and provides potential solutions for it. This paper is truly a review of the literature that tackles the issue from a broad perspective at first but narrows the subject for further analysis by future researchers. I’m very proud of my finished product that I worked on for around 3 months and had significant feedback from my professor. Dr. Almstedt provided me with excellent edits and comments that helped me clarify my research question and

develop a well thought out and well written paper. This paper is one of my proudest accomplishments in college and I hope to use this work in my future career goals as both a physician's assistant and in the public health field.