

# Personal Weight Beliefs Predictive of Eating Behavior Patterns and Actual Weight in Young African-American Women

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## Introduction

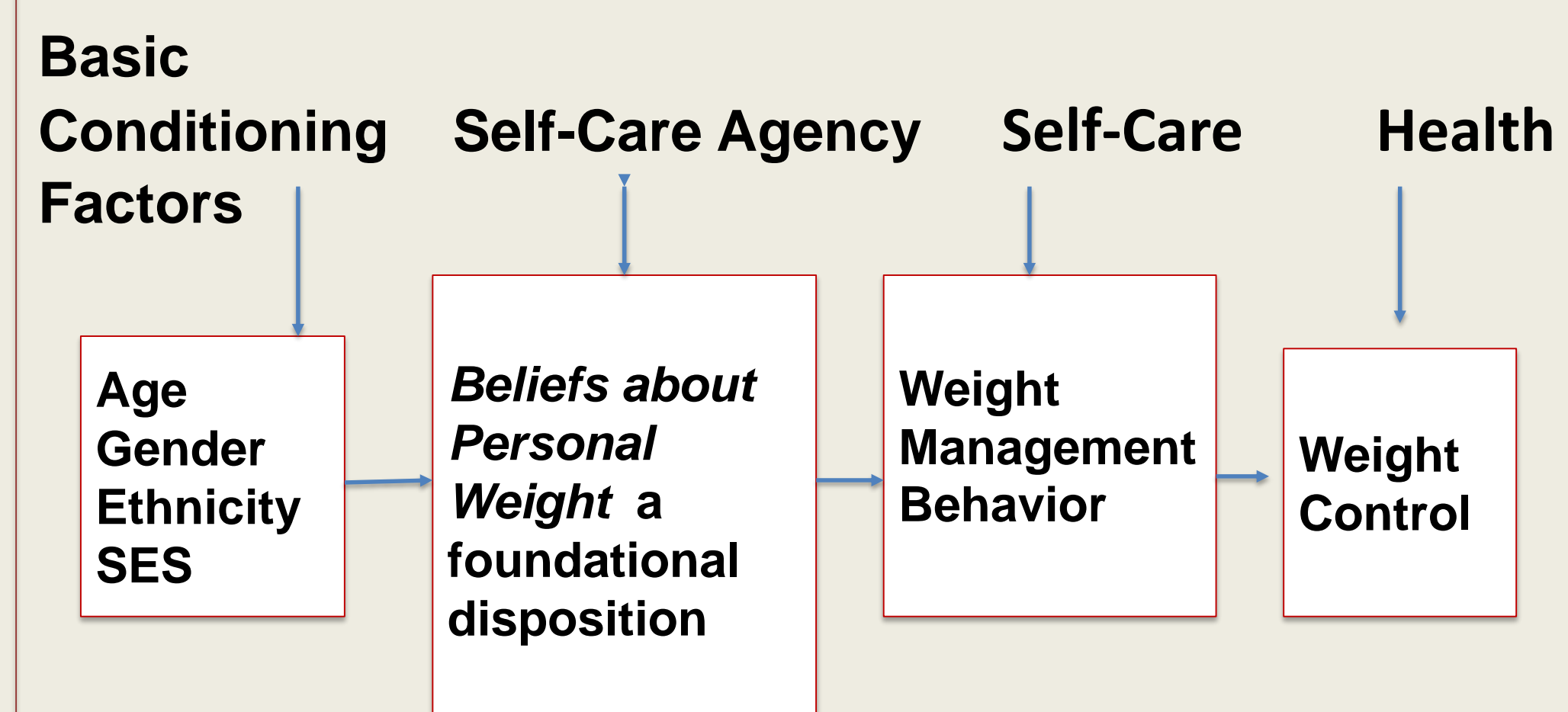
- African American women bear a disproportionate burden of overweight and obesity in the U.S. <sup>1</sup>
  - 82% overweight
  - 59% obese
- African American women are at increased risk for obesity related illnesses e. g. CVD, DM type 2, sleep apnea <sup>2</sup>
- Multiple factors contribute to excess weight <sup>3,4,5,6,7</sup>
  - 57% sedentary
  - 87% do not consume 5 servings of fruits & vegetables/day
  - Culturally influenced weight beliefs
- Beliefs and Behavior**
- Beliefs are a certainty that a proposition is true
- Acquired through culture and inferred from one's speech or actions
- Beliefs are predispositions to action <sup>8,9,10</sup>
- Health beliefs have been associated with engaging in health behaviors but this relationship has had limited examination with regard to weight beliefs and weight management behavior e.g. eating behavior patterns <sup>11</sup>

## Objective

- The objective of the study was to determine whether beliefs about personal weight were predictive of eating behavior patterns and weight in young African American women.
- Defining : Beliefs about Personal Weight**
- Beliefs about a belief object (e.g. weight) are made explicit or accessible through inquiry about:
  - Characteristics
  - Causal attributions
  - Consequences
- Definition:**
- Beliefs about personal weight is a multidimensional concept regarding the descriptive characteristics, causal attributions, and consequences of one's personal weight.

## Conceptual Framework – TSC\*

- Beliefs about personal weight are conceptualized as a foundational disposition within self-care agency in the theory of self-care\* <sup>12</sup>



## Methods

- Design:
  - Observational, Cross-Sectional
- Sample and Setting:
  - N = 150 African American women
  - Not pregnant or breastfeeding
  - Generally good health
  - Academic, medical and community sites
- Age 18-40 yrs, M = 28.39, (SD 7.69)
- Education 9-22 yrs, M = 13.78, (SD 2.04)
- Annual Income 63.90% < \$ 25,000
- BMI 16-52 M = 31.50, (SD 7.82)
- Instruments/Measurements
  - Beliefs about Personal Weight Survey (BPW)<sup>13</sup>
    - 57 items - 16 composite-scales developed from principal component items
      - Descriptor domain (α .68 - .90)
      - Cause domain (α .38 -.80)
      - Consequence domain (α .68 - .90)
  - Eating Behavior Pattern Questionnaire <sup>14</sup> (α .46 - .87)
  - 51 items measuring six dimensions of eating behavior [low fat eating, snacking on sweets, cultural/lifestyle, haphazard planning, meal skipping, emotional eating]
  - BMI
    - Calculated using measured weight and height
    - Weight-pounds using portable scale
    - Height-inches using portable stadiometer Seca 217

## Results

### Regression Models: Beliefs about Personal Weight Predictive of Eating Behavior Patterns

Weight Beliefs	Eating Behavior	Beta	R <sup>2</sup>
Descriptors Beliefs Overweight	Emotional eating	.35**	.12
Causal Beliefs Healthy Eating Unhealthy Eating	Low Fat eating	.27** -.24*	.16
Causal Beliefs Healthy Eating Unhealthy Eating Stress Factors	Emotional eating	-.21** .31** .30**	.34
Causal beliefs Healthy Eating Unhealthy Eating	Haphazard Meal Planning	-.21** .31**	.18
Consequence Beliefs Emotional	Emotional Eating	.37**	.13

### Regression Models: Beliefs about Personal Weight Predictive of BMI

Weight Beliefs	BMI	Beta	R <sup>2</sup>
Descriptor beliefs Overweight	BMI	.71**	.51
Causal Beliefs Unhealthy eating	BMI	.39**	.15
Consequence Beliefs Health Problems	BMI	.41**	.17

\*p= < .05, \*\*p= < .01

## Conclusions

- Causal and consequence beliefs about personal weight most predictive of eating behavior patterns (**low fat eating, emotional eating, haphazard meal planning**)
- Beliefs about weight descriptors (**overweight**) most predictive of BMI
- Beliefs about Personal Weight among young African American women
  - Predictive of eating behavior patterns
  - Predictive of BMI
- Implications for Clinical Practice
  - Assisting young African American women with weight management should include:
    - Assessing patient's beliefs about personal weight **descriptors, causes and consequences**