From Thin to Full Figured: An Examination of Health Behavioral Patterns of Black Women
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The problem this study examined was the risks associated with overweight and obesity among Black women who coexist in a society bombarded with pressure to be thin and in a culture that embraces a full-figured stature. A convenience sample of 150 Black women from Queens and Brooklyn, New York was utilized in this study. They were administered the Contemporary Eating Patterns and Physical Activity Questionnaire (CEPPAQ); the Eating Exercise and Body Image Attitudes and Beliefs Questionnaire (ABQ); and the Computer/Internet Experience and Skills Questionnaire. The results of the data analysis revealed that 33% (n=49) of Black women ate at a fast food establishment over the past month, and the food of choice by most (27%, n=37) was McDonald’s. Forty-two percent (n=63) of Black women perceived themselves as overweight for their height. Thirty-four percent (n=31) of women in this study had a BMI greater than 30, indicating that they were overweight or obese. Fifty-three percent (n= 79) indicated that they were at risk for chronic illnesses, yet 53% (n=79) of participants indicated that their physicians did not see them at risk. Cutting down or avoiding television viewing and viewing while eating was not considered by 42% (n=63) of the participants, indicating that they were in the Precontemplation stage of change. Many participants believed that members of their culture feel that having big body parts was attractive, but 46% (n=69) disagreed that they personally believed that having big body parts was attractive.

One of the findings was that education level was negatively correlated with BMI revealing that as education increases, BMI decreases. Maladaptive eating behaviors were positively correlated with BMI increases. Change to adaptive eating behaviors was negatively correlated with BMI, indicating that as more positive
change to adaptive eating behaviors increase, BMI decreases. Self-efficacy/confidence to adopt adaptive eating behaviors was negatively correlated with BMI, revealing that as self-efficacy increases, BMI decreases. Exercise was negatively correlated with BMI, indicating that as exercise habits increase, BMI decreases. Internet use for exercise was negatively correlated with BMI, demonstrating that as confidence in using the internet for exercise increases, BMI decreases.