

Study: Adolescent obesity tied to economic status

By Melissa Healy, Los Angeles Times

From many corners of the United States – Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Mississippi – recent years have brought heartening news about the relentless rise in obesity among American children: Several years into a campaign to get kids to eat better and exercise more, child obesity rates have appeared to stabilize, and might be poised for a reversal.

But a study published Monday in the journal PNAS suggests that among adolescents, the hopeful signs are limited to those from better-educated, more affluent families. Among teens from poorer, less well-educated families, obesity has continued to rise.

Nationally, rates of obesity among adolescents 12 to 19 did not rise between 2003-04 and 2009-10. But during that period, obesity rates among adolescents whose parents have no more than a high-school education rose from about 20 percent to 25 percent. At the same time, the teenage children of parents with a four-year college degree or more saw their obesity rates decline from 14 percent to about 7 percent.

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