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Lustig, Robert H

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Letters

COMMENT & RESPONSE

In Reply In their letter, Morain and Barnhill appropriately point out that child caregivers come in many shapes, sizes, sexes, and situations and that focusing on mothers for cooking is inadequate for today's pluralistic household.¹ I agree wholeheartedly with the premise that men are as deficient as women in cooking skills; yet, there is plenty of evidence that the history and art of cooking is passed from mother (rather than from father) to children.² Indeed, I believe that all children are now vulnerable owing to the lack of intergenerational transmission of food preparation and cooking education and that it is imperative that we as a society provide for all children to learn how to cook as an adult survival skill. To wit, I wrote a 2012 *Huffington Post* article titled "Bring Back 'Home Ec,' and This Time for Boys Too."³

However, I do not agree with Morain and Barnhill's second premise that today's societal time constraints and responsibilities have made food preparation and cooking too difficult for caregivers to perform. Rather, I would argue that they have acceded to the same propaganda and disinformation campaign that the processed food industry has used to co-opt families across the United States for decades. Yet these 2 threads are inextricably tied; if you do not know how to cook, then it's easy to blame a chaotic home situation and lifestyle on the fact that you cannot manage food purchasing, preparation, and cooking. It is for this exact reason that nutrition/food service educator Cindy Gershen⁴ and I wrote a "real food" cookbook⁵ in which each recipe was vetted by a group of Mt Diablo High School, Concord, California, students to be producible, consumable, and delicious within 30 minutes; the time it takes to drive to, order, and eat at a fast food restaurant.

I treat obese children in the University of California, San Francisco, Weight Assessment for Teen and Child Health Clinic every day. It is precisely because I understand these families' experiences that I can help refocus them on what is most important: their children's health. By explaining the biochemical differences between "processed food" and "real food," and then yoking these differences to their child's metabolic dysfunction, we are able to make great strides in these families reclaiming both their food supply and their health.

Robert H. Lustig, MD, MSL

Author Affiliation: Department of Pediatrics, Institute for Health Policy Studies, University of California, San Francisco.

Corresponding Author: Robert H. Lustig, MD, MSL, University of California, San Francisco, Box 0434, Department of Pediatrics, 550 16th St, 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94143-0434 (robert.lustig@ucsf.edu).

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Conflict of Interest Disclosures: Dr Lustig authored the book *Fat Chance* and coauthored the book *The Fat Chance Cookbook*.

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