Tackling Obesity in Early Childhood: Prevention, Prevention, Prevention

A Public Policy Exchange Symposium

Tuesday 6th September 2011
The Silken Berlaymont Hotel, Brussels

"An International Symposium for gathering knowledge, discussing the latest challenges and sharing best practices in tackling obesity and developing effective health promotion strategies in Europe"

In partnership with

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Overview

Obesity has reached epidemic levels in recent years. Currently, the average obesity rate in the European Union is 15.5%, and even more alarmingly, the prevalence of overweight children was estimated at 30% in 2006.

Since it is difficult to reduce excessive weight once it becomes established, the general consensus amongst researchers is that prevention could be the key strategy for controlling the current epidemic of obesity, and therefore, the focus needs to shift towards children and early intervention strategies. Indeed, despite the numerous initiatives across Europe which include actions on poor diet, nutrition and low physical activities, prevention in early childhood is yet to emerge at the top of the EU agenda.

It is clear that promoting healthy diets and stimulating physical activity alone do not work. This timely International Symposium reignites the debate on how to work towards an effective EU-wide action plan on tackling obesity in children. With a central theme of prevention and early intervention, the symposium not only focuses on the unaddressed very early years of a child’s life but will also highlight the pre-conceptual years and the crucial role played by parents. Some of the key issues to discussed include:

- Obesity identification – promoting the wider use of Body Mass Index (BMI) as a key tool to target weight issues in young children outside a clinical environment.
- Education – early years through to early teens where today’s children can be taught to raise their children healthily when they become the parents of tomorrow.
- Action in pregnancy/childbirth – encouraging breastfeeding and understanding the impact of early solids and toddler meals.
- Comparative best practices – the IDEFICS Project analysing the prevalence of obesity in two to nine year-olds in eight European countries.

The Symposium will support the exchange of ideas and encourage delegates to engage in thought-provoking topical debate whilst sharing best practices and lessons learned.

Why Attend?

✓ Tackle the unaddressed very early periods in the child’s life and highlight the crucial importance of pre-conceptual years for effective obesity prevention.
✓ Stress the need for a comprehensive and holistic framework for breaking the vicious cycle of obesity in Europe.
✓ Identify lessons learned from various obesity prevention initiatives and hear recommendations for future policy actions in Europe.
✓ Examine relevant case studies on early prevention and sharing some good practices.

Who Should Attend?

- Child Health Practitioners
- Health Promotion Advisers
- Child Obesity Experts
- Obesity Researchers
- Local authorities
- Social Workers
- National Authorities
- Nutrition Associations
- Academics
- NGOs
- Centres for Physical Activities
- Hospitals and Health Organisations
- General Health Practitioners
- Centres for Child and Adolescent Health
- Psychiatric Departments
- National Institutes for Child Health
- Universities
- Experts on Obesity-related Diseases
- Midwifes
- Experts on Dietetics and Metabolic Diseases
- Obesity Societies
- Experts on Obesity and Metabolism
- Cardiovascular Units
- Experts on Diabetes
- Primary Schools Associations

Venue and Accommodation

The Silken Berlaymont Hotel,
11-19, Boulevard Charlemagne
1000 Brussels - Belgium

Through our partnership with the Silken Berlaymont Hotel we are pleased to be able to offer our delegates specially negotiated accommodation rates. These discounted room rates are subject to availability and are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

The root causes for obesity are a combination of lifestyle factors – unhealthy diets, poor eating habits, sedentary living and not enough physical activity. To help address the multiple causes of obesity, the European Commission developed a Strategy for Europe on nutrition, overweight and obesity-related health issues. This Strategy sets out a broad framework for Community policies aimed at preventing overweight and obesity, encompassing health, research, education, agriculture, transport and media regulation. Children are a priority in all our action to address obesity. The European Commission is further supporting projects to increase knowledge and understanding of how to prevent child obesity through our EU Health Programme.”

- John Dalli, European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, June 2011
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Programme

09:00 Registration and Morning Refreshments
10:00 Chair’s Welcome and Opening Remarks

Mr. Tam Fry, Honorary Chairman, Child Growth Foundation, National Obesity Forum, UK

10:10 Session One: Identifying Obesity in Europe – Using the Right Tools
- The Importance of Gender-Specific Body Mass Index (BMI) for Effective Prevention
- Creating Systematic Approaches across Europe
- Existing Mechanisms for Effective Prevention across Europe
- Recommendations for Future Policy Actions

10:25 First Round of Discussions
10:55 Morning Coffee Break

11:15 Session Two: Towards a Comprehensive EU-Wide “Pre-School” Approach in Preventing Obesity?
- Encouraging Healthy Eating Patterns in Children
- Existing “Pandemics” – Creating Preventing Strategies
- Vulnerable Groups of Children
- The Potential Role of the EU in Preventing Obesity at an Early Stage
- Future Recommendations

11:30 Second Round of Discussions
12:00 Session Three: Preventing Obesity During and After Pregnancy
- Pre-Conceptual Care
- Breastfeeding and Weaning – Some Best Practices and Lessons Learned
- Weaning and First Year Foods
- Recommendations

12:15 Third Round of Discussions
12.45 Networking Lunch
13.45 Session Four: Preventing Obesity through Physical Activity
- Establishing Healthy Behaviour in Early Childhood
- Best Practices and Lessons Learned
- Recommendations

14.00 Fourth Round of Discussions
14.30 Afternoon Coffee Break

14:45 Session Five: The IDEFICS Study: Preventing Obesity in Early Childhood
- Better Understanding of Obesity in Early Childhood
- Effectiveness and Some Best Practices
- Conclusions and Recommendations for future Policy Actions at EU, National and Local Levels

15:00 Fifth Round of Discussions
15:30 Chairman’s Summary and Closing Comments
15:40 Networking Reception
16:30 Close

**Please note that the programme is subject to change without notice**

Event Details

Date: Tuesday 6th September 2011
Time: 10:00am – 4:30pm
Venue: The Silken Berlaymont Hotel, Brussels

Speakers include

- Prof. Philip James, Chairman, International Obesity Task Force, UK
- Dr Joao Breda, Programme Manager, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Programme, World Health Organisation (Europe)
- Dr Eric Steegers, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Erasmus University Medical Centre, Rotterdam, Netherlands
- Mr Adrian Voece, Director, Play England, UK
- Prof Stefaan de Henauw, Nutrition and Food Safety, University of Gent, Belgium

“We, the WHO European database on nutrition, obesity and physical activity (NOPA) has been created in close collaboration with health ministries and with support from the European Commission. It includes details on more than 300 national and sub-national policies in the WHO European Region that address nutrition, physical activity or obesity. Most of these policy documents have been developed in the past six years and refer to changing demographic and lifestyle trends such as the increasing consumption of industrially produced foods high in fat and sugar and declining physical activity.”

- World Health Organisation, May 2011

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