

ORIGINAL PAPER

Interventions for Childhood Obesity Control in Cyprus: An analysis and Evaluation of Programmes and Protocols

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Abstract

In the last twenty years, there has been an increase in the prevalence of obesity with a simultaneous increase in chronic diseases.

Aim: The aim of this literature review is to discuss available interventions for childhood obesity (2-11 years) and to propose effective prevention policies for the Republic of Cyprus.

Methods: Childhood obesity prevention and intervention programs in Cyprus were analysed using SWOT analysis and evaluation protocols for compatibility and sustainability among health professionals and government partners.

Results: The preliminary literature review reveals that there are specific shortcomings with regards to the existing NHS and public health. The sustainability of existing health policies and implemented programs is questionable as there are no coherent monitoring systems in place. There are many worthwhile programs and organizations that are often delayed due to conflict of interest.

Conclusions: Analysis shows that the implementation, via a Cypriot National Health System, of public health strategies could be effective means of addressing specifically childhood obesity. This includes a more active role for the family physician and policies of a multi-level strategy, aiming at fostering innovative public-private healthcare collaborations, supported by educational institutions, infrastructure, legislation and the wider society.

However, such strategies are needed on a long-term basis and throughout a person's life span.

Keywords childhood obesity, chronic diseases, prevention, Cyprus, innovative interventions, primary care, National Health System.