



## All-island Obesity News

**E-bulletin of the All-island Obesity Action Forum  
Volume 4, Issue 5, September/October 2012**

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to this edition of All-island Obesity News. I am happy to announce that the Forum's next workshop will take place in Dublin on Tuesday the 27<sup>th</sup> November. It will focus on the important role healthcare professionals play in the fight against overweight and obesity and will be hosted by the All-island Obesity Action Forum, supported by **safefood** and the **Irish Medical Organisation**. It will focus on healthcare professionals' awareness and comfort in raising the issue with patients, their role in normalising discussion and management, and in reducing the stigma associated with obesity. It will also see the launch of a research report based on healthcare professional's attitudes to overweight and obesity which has been conducted across the island of Ireland. Keynote speakers include Dr Paul Chadwick (MEND) and Dr Donal O'Shea from St Colmcille's hospital in Loughlinstown. This event will provide a platform for information sharing, networking and collaboration.

As usual the first section of this bulletin contains information directly submitted by Forum members. We would ask you to circulate this among your colleagues and to share your work via this publication by submitting all relevant news items to Emily Kelleher at [obesityforum@safefood.eu](mailto:obesityforum@safefood.eu).

*Martin Higgins,*  
*Chief Executive, **safefood** and Chair, All-island Obesity Action Forum*

Minutes of Forum meetings, events and further details about the Forum can be accessed on the [Forum page of the safefood website](#).

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## Update from Forum Members

### **safefood**

- **Nutrition Take Out series**

This October saw the publication of the latest in a series of reviews of takeaway foods and continues **safefood**'s work in helping consumers make more informed choices when eating food that is prepared outside the home. 'What's in your Chinese Takeaway?' – was a research report on Chinese takeaway food. The aim of this survey was to provide a snapshot of the nutritional content of a sample of Chinese dishes purchased from a selection of takeaway outlets and restaurants with a takeaway service on the island of Ireland. The report found that eating a typical Chinese takeaway meal of a starter, main course and egg fried rice can contain much more calories than an adult's total daily requirements and one and a half times their recommended maximum level of salt. Specific results showed that for instance an average portion (104g) of Prawn Crackers contained 608 calories, almost a third of an adults' guideline daily amount. Read the [full report](#) on [www.safefood.eu](http://www.safefood.eu)

- **safefood** Dietetic Directory

Many thanks for your recent clinical updates. We are now calling for obesity-related projects carried out by dietitians/dietetic departments both hospital and community based. These include obesity research completed in the last 5 years, audits, on-going weight management projects and programmes. The aim is to collate all obesity activities by dietitians in one place to update and inform dietitians and to feed into All-Island obesity programmes. Some of you may have contributed to the survey by the INDI's Weight Management Interest Group earlier this year, if so, you do not need to re-submit. If not, please email abstracts or summaries of projects or programmes, including department name, address; your name and email address to [dietetics@safefood.eu](mailto:dietetics@safefood.eu). Please check with your department manager (where relevant).

You can access the directory online via the following link **safefood** [Dietetic Directory](#).

### **Queen's University Belfast**

The 2012 **Nutrition Society Summer Meeting** was held at Queen's University Belfast. The meeting theme, 'Translational nutrition: integrating research, practice and policy' was chosen to stimulate discussion around the links between nutrition research, dietetic and clinical practice and government policy but also to identify gaps in knowledge in healthcare settings and stimulating research to fill those gaps. The topic was well received as the meeting was attended by approximately 420 delegates, including nutritionists, policy-makers, academics, food industry representatives, dieticians, clinicians and other healthcare professionals, as well as both undergraduate and postgraduate students. The event organiser, Dr Jayne Woodside, was also awarded the prestigious Nutrition Society Silver Medal in recognition of her international reputation in the field of diet and health and in particular for her innovative research and extensive academic publication record.

### **HRB Centre for Health and Diet Research**

- **Cluster 5 Update**

This group investigates psycho-social factors relating to how people think about food and health which in turn influences their food choice behaviour. The group have carried out a number of interlinked projects looking at these factors across a range of key populations: women during pregnancy and post-partum, middle-aged and older people and people who have attended a clinical weight management service. They have also explored media representations of obesity, online discussion of obesity and engaged in secondary analysis of existing datasets. An online survey investigating public

understanding and beliefs about the causes of obesity has also been completed. A number of new papers are in preparation and the latest research findings have been well-received at a number of conferences recently including the International Congress for Behavioural Medicine, the Society for Reproductive and Infant Psychology and the British Psychological Society annual conference. The group's on-going work addresses topics including views about weight gain during pregnancy and post-partum weight loss, older adult's considerations of healthy eating, psychological predictors of engagement and weight loss during a weight management programme, and negative attitudes towards the obese in online discussion. At the moment they are in the final stages of designing a national survey that will address important issues highlighted from research across the group to be investigated in a nationally representative adult population sample.

- **Publications**

[Measured Parental Weight Status and Familial Socio- Economic Status Correlates with Childhood Overweight and Obesity at Age 9.](#)

[Low glycaemic index diet in pregnancy to prevent macrosomia \(ROLO study\): randomised control trial.](#)

### **Association for the Study of Obesity on the island of Ireland**

The Association for the Study of Obesity on the Island of Ireland (ASOI) was officially launched on September 6<sup>th</sup> 2012 at the Inaugural ASOI Conference. The ASOI has been established (application underway) as the representative association for the Island of Ireland at the International Association for the Study of Obesity (IASO) and the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO). Prior to 2012 Ireland was represented by the ASO U.K. The main objective of ASOI is to advance the education of professionals and the public regarding the causes, consequences, treatment, and prevention of obesity. Details of the ASOI mission can be found on [www.asoi.info](http://www.asoi.info). ASOI currently has 85 members and that number continues to grow.

- **Inaugural ASOI Meeting**

The Inaugural Meeting was a hugely successful event and the theme of 'Obesity through the lifecycle' was well received. There were 105 attendees and 65 scientific abstract submissions hailing from all over the Island. Support for the event was received from Irish members of the European Childhood Obesity Group ([www.ecog-obesity.eu](http://www.ecog-obesity.eu)). Presentations on the day explored the evidence base regarding obesity prevalence; the importance of the in-utero environment; enhancing communication between clinicians and clients; the school environment; obesity treatment and future directions for public health. In addition, positive results were described regarding the success of the W82GO evidence-based childhood obesity treatment at The Children's University Hospital, Temple Street.

- **ASOI Medal**

The Inaugural ASOI Medal (2012) was presented to **Suzanne Doyle** from St James's Hospital/TCD for her work which investigated the association between visceral obesity and post-operative inflammation.

- **ASOI Research Award News**

Congratulations to Dr. Fiona McGillicuddy and her mentor Prof Helen Roche (ASOI member). Dr McGillicuddy's research in UCD has received the first grant from Science Foundation Ireland, the Health Research Board and the Wellcome Trust (097311/Z/11/Z) under the SFI-HRB-Wellcome Trust Biomedical Research Partnership.

## [General News](#)

### **17.08.12: Measured Parental Weight Status and Familial Socio- Economic Status Correlates with Childhood Overweight and Obesity at Age 9. (ROI)**

This cross-sectional study investigated the association between measured parent weight status, familial socio-economic factors and the risk of childhood obesity at age 9. Results showed that 25% of children were either overweight (19.3%) or obese (6.6%). Parental obesity was found to be a significant predictor of child obesity. Of children with normal weight parents, 14.4% were overweight or obese whereas 46.2% of children with obese parents were overweight or obese. Read [full text](#) on PLOSone.

### **07.09.12: Obesity and overweight in intellectual and non-intellectually disabled children. (NI)**

This research compared the prevalence of overweight and obesity between a sample of intellectually disabled (ID) and non-intellectually disabled (N-ID) school pupils in Northern Ireland (NI). Comparison of the physical activity and dietary behaviour of the two groups of school pupils were also undertaken. Results of this study found higher levels of overweight and obesity in this sample than in international published research. Additionally significantly higher numbers of ID pupils were overweight and obese indicating the need for future research and public health to focus on this issue. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

### **September 2012: Children in hospital in Ireland - what do they eat and what do they weigh: a cross-sectional study. (ROI)**

This cross-sectional study examined parents' perceptions of a healthy diet and their children's BMI while also evaluating the food offered to children in a paediatric in-patient unit. Twenty-one children (26.9%) were overweight/obese: 14/21 parents (66.7%) thought their child had a normal weight. Sixty per cent of children served dinner in the hospital were given fried potatoes while four had fruit/vegetables. The nutritional value of food served to children in hospital needs to be improved and hospital admissions used as opportunities to promote healthy eating habits. Read [full text](#) in BioMed Central.

### **September 2012: WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative 2008: weight, height and body mass index in 6-9-year-old children. (EU)**

This study presents the anthropometric results of data collected in 2007/2008 and investigated whether differences exist across countries and between the sexes. A total of 168 832 children were included in the analyses and a school participation rate of more than 95% was obtained in 8 out of 12 countries. Stunting, underweight and thinness were rarely prevalent. 19.3-49.0% of boys and 18.4-42.5% of girls were overweight. The prevalence of obesity ranged from 6.0 to 26.6% among boys and from 4.6 to 17.3% among girls. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

### **11.09.12: Fighting obesity or obese persons? Public perceptions of obesity-related health messages.**

This study examined public perceptions of obesity-related public health media campaigns with specific emphasis on the extent to which campaign messages are perceived to be motivating or stigmatizing. Participants responded most favourably to messages involving themes of increased fruit and vegetable consumption, and general messages involving multiple health behaviours. Messages that were perceived to be most positive and motivating made no mention of the word 'obesity' at all, and instead focused on making healthy behavioural changes without reference to body weight. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

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**25.09.12: Cardiovascular disease risk in healthy children and its association with body mass index: systematic review and meta-analysis. (EU)**

The objective of this review was to describe the association and its magnitude between body mass index category, sex, and cardiovascular disease risk parameters in school aged children in highly developed countries. The authors included 63 studies of 49 220 children and results found that having a body mass index outside the normal range significantly worsens risk parameters for cardiovascular disease in school aged children. This effect, already substantial in overweight children, increases in obesity and could be larger than previously thought. Read [full text](#) in BMJ.

**19.09.12: A "Small-Changes" Workplace Weight Loss and Maintenance Program: Examination of Weight and Health Outcomes. (New Zealand)**

The objectives of this study were to compare the effect of "small-changes" and "usual care" workplace interventions on weight loss and to investigate the effect of small changes with or without maintenance on weight and health outcomes. Overweight/obese employees at two worksites received a 12-month usual-care intervention, followed by a 12-month small-changes intervention. Small changes comprised a 12-week component, followed by 9 months of maintenance, implemented at only one worksite. Authors concluded that regardless of maintenance, the small-changes intervention was successful in sustaining weight loss. Read [abstract](#) in Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine.

**August 2012: Midwives perspectives of their training and education requirements in maternal obesity: A qualitative study. (UK)**

The objective of this study was to explore midwives' perceptions of their training and education requirements in relation to maternal obesity. Three main themes were identified: discussing obesity, weight management, and practicalities of training. Midwives' justification for the need for training was centrally connected to all themes, and there were strong views on the need for training and education, and the potential benefits to their practice. Issues relating to obesity communication were most prominent. Midwives' uncertainty about effective obesity communication and management, and concerns of a negative impact on the midwife-woman relationship, are key barriers to their practice. Read [abstract](#) in Science Direct.

**August 2012: Association between lifetime stress and obesity in Canadians. (Canada)**

This analysis was based on data from 112,716 Canadians aged 18 years or more who participated in a national survey conducted in 2007-2008. Results showed that lifetime stress was associated with an increased risk of obesity especially in women. Read [abstract](#) in Science Direct.

**19.09.12: Annual Variation in Internet Keyword Searches: Linking Dieting Interest to Obesity and Negative Health Outcomes. (US)**

This study investigated the annual variation in internet searches regarding dieting. The results indicated that keyword searches for dieting fit a consistent 12-month linear model, peaking in January (following New Year's Eve) and then linearly decreasing until surging again the following January. Additional state-level analyses revealed that the size of the December-January dieting-related keyword surge was predictive of both obesity and mortality rates due to diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

**07.08.12: A decrease in diet quality occurs during pregnancy in overweight and obese women which is maintained post-partum (AUS).**

The aim of this study was to perform a comprehensive assessment of diet quality in overweight and obese women during pregnancy and early post-partum. In this prospective cohort study overweight and obese pregnant women completed food frequency questionnaires at various points during their pregnancy. This study found

dietary quality decreases across pregnancy and is maintained at this reduced level in the early post-partum period in overweight and obese women. Dietary interventions aimed at improving diet quality should be targeted to early pregnancy and post-partum. Read [abstract](#) at NCBI.

**July 2012: Do children eat less at meals when allowed to serve themselves?**

The objective of this study was to examine individual differences in the effects of plated and self-served entrée portions on children's energy intake. Contrary to the authors' hypothesis, relative to plated portions, allowing children to self-serve the entrée portion did not reduce energy intake. Children who were more responsive to portion-size effects were likely to self-serve and eat larger entrée portions. Self-serving is not a one-size-fits-all approach; some children may need guidance and rules to learn how to self-select appropriate portion sizes. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

**September 2012: People can be fat yet fit, research suggests – BBC News/ NHS Choices**

Researchers from the University of South Carolina have reported that people can be obese yet physically healthy and fit and at no greater risk of heart disease or cancer than normal weight people. The key is being "metabolically fit", meaning no high blood pressure, cholesterol or raised blood sugar, and exercising, according to experts. Read news article on both [BBC News](#) and [NHS Choices](#).

**13.08.12: The Relationship between Fat Mass, Eating Behaviour and Obesity-Related Psychological Traits in Overweight and Obese Individuals. (UK)**

This study examined the relationship between fat mass and behavioural measures of eating and obesity related psychological traits in overweight/obese individuals. The study used two sets of principal component analyses; validated questionnaires of eating behaviour and psychological traits and a second on fat mass and body weight related anthropometric measures. The findings suggest that levels of body fat and eating behaviour are strongly related and obesity may be driven by behavioural factors associated with eating in combination with pre-existing environmental and genetic factors. Read [abstract](#) at Science Direct.

**September 2012: Changes in maternal weight 5-10 years after a first delivery. (US)**

The objective of this study was to identify maternal, obstetrical and reproductive factors associated with long-term changes in maternal weight after delivery. Participants were enrolled in a longitudinal cohort study of maternal health 5-10 years after childbirth. Data were obtained from obstetrical records and a self-administered questionnaire. Among 948 women, obesity was associated with race, parity, education, history of diabetes and history of caesarean at the time of first delivery. Black women and those with a history of diabetes may be appropriate targets for interventions that promote a long-term healthy weight after childbirth. Read [abstract](#) at Future Medicine.

**August 2012: Body mass index and mortality in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease: a meta-analysis.**

The association between body mass index (BMI) and mortality in patients suffering from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) has been a subject of interest for decades. Results of this meta-analysis showed that for patients with COPD being overweight or obese had a protective effect against mortality. However, the relationship between BMI and mortality in different classes of obesity needed further clarification in well-designed clinical studies. Read [full text](#) in PLOS one.

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### **July 2012: Consumer response to healthy eating, physical activity and weight-related recommendations: a systematic review.**

The aim of this review was to examine consumer response to weight-related guidelines. Of the 1,765 articles identified, 46 relevant titles were included. Recognition of guidelines did not signify understanding nor did perceived credibility of a source guarantee utilisation of guidelines. Further research is needed, in particular regarding responses to physical activity guidelines and guidelines in different populations. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

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### **Nutrition News**

#### **30.08.12: Low glycaemic index diet in pregnancy to prevent macrosomia (ROLO study): randomised control trial. (ROI)**

The aim of this randomised controlled trial was to determine if a low glycaemic index diet in pregnancy could reduce the incidence of macrosomia in an at risk group. Authors concluded that a low glycaemic index diet in pregnancy did not reduce the incidence of large for gestational age infants in a group at risk of fetal macrosomia. It did, however, have a significant positive effect on gestational weight gain and maternal glucose intolerance. Read the [full text](#) in the BMJ.

#### **10.08.12: EUFIC reviews European evidence on whether nutrition labelling has helped prevent obesity.**

EUFIC reviewed the scientific evidence published between 2007 and March 2012 to discover whether nutrition labelling helps consumers manage their dietary intakes to achieve a healthy body weight. Authors concluded that most people can use the different nutrition labelling schemes available to identify more healthful (less calorific) choices, but they lack the motivation to factor nutrition information into their purchasing decisions. Price, taste and time constraints are key aspects to consider for more effective nutrition labelling. Read [more](#) on EUFIC.

#### **25.07.2012: Diet macronutrient composition reported before treatment predicts BMI change in obese children: the role of lipids**

Study investigators tested the theory that diet composition reported by children before the beginning of an obesity treatment program could be a predicting factor of the clinical outcome. Children with a lipid intake above 34.7% of total energy had a 2.5 times higher chance of reducing at least 1.5 units of BMI with treatment than children with lower lipid intake. Results suggest that the assessment of habitual diet, in particular diet composition before starting treatment, may help to identify obese children who are more sensitive to intervention and those who need more specific nutritional assistance. Read [abstract](#) in European Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

#### **August 2012: Serving size guidance for consumers: is it effective? (UK)**

The aim of this review was to evaluate serving size guidance by its usability, understanding and acceptability. A sample of worldwide serving size guidance schemes was reviewed and overall the messages were inconsistent and often conflicting with portion size selection. The available data suggest that consumers have difficulty in understanding terms such as 'portion size' and 'serving size', as these tend to be used interchangeably. Serving size and portion size guidance merits further investigation to ensure it is usable and acceptable. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

#### **May 2012: Fast food and obesity: a spatial analysis in a large United Kingdom population of children aged 13-15. (UK)**

The aim of this study was to assess the relationship between fast-food consumption and obesity; and the relationship between fast-food outlet access and consumption in a cohort of teenagers. 2004-2008 data was collected to assess the relationships between fast-food consumption at age 13 years and weight status at ages 13 and 15 years, and

separately between fast-food accessibility and consumption. The study found that more rural areas had increased consumption with increased accessibility and some urban areas had lack of consumption within creased accessibility. In conclusion health interventions that place restrictions on the location of fast-food outlets may not uniformly decrease consumption. Read [abstract](#) at the American Journal of Preventive Medicine.

### **13.08.12: Is there a robust relationship between neighbourhood food environment and childhood obesity in the USA? (US)**

The aim of this observational study was to examine the relationship between neighbourhood food environment and youth BMI. The study used individual-level longitudinal survey data of children in fifth and eighth grades merged with food outlet data based on student residential census tracts. To the extent that there is an association between food environment and youth BMI, the existence of more types of food outlets in an area, including supermarkets, is associated with higher BMI. Read [abstract](#) in the journal of Public Health.

### **September 2012: EUFIC reviews European evidence on whether nutrition labelling has helped encourage healthy eating**

A recent review has highlighted the latest research on whether nutrition labelling has been effective in encouraging healthy eating. While the last decade has seen the emergence of a great deal of research in this area, it remains unclear whether the provision of nutrition information has been able to prompt consumers to make healthier food choices in real life. Read [more](#) on EUFIC.

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## **[Physical Activity News](#)**

### **10.09.12: Fitness on Facebook: Advertisements Generated in Response to Profile Content.**

With over 94% of students maintaining a Facebook profile, the social networking site may be an innovative venue for improving college students' fitness behaviours. The purpose of this study was to determine (a) how and to what extent college students are discussing fitness on Facebook, and (b) how user-generated fitness information is linked to advertisements for fitness products and advice. Results show that around 71.9% of profiles referenced one or more fitness behaviour; 97.6% referenced exercise, 4.9% dieting, and 4.9% unhealthy eating. Authors concluded that a community - or university-based intervention could be designed and implemented to provide relevant and tailored information to students on Facebook. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

### **06.08.12: Can sedentary behaviour be made more active? A randomized pilot study of TV commercial stepping versus walking. (US)**

The purpose of this study was to examine the feasibility of incorporating physical activity (PA) into a traditionally sedentary activity, by comparing TV Commercial Stepping during 90 min/d of TV programming to traditional exercise (Walking). Participants in both the TV Commercial Stepping and Walking groups had favourable changes in daily steps, TV viewing, diet, and anthropometrics. PA can be performed while viewing TV commercials and this may be a feasible alternative to traditional approaches for increasing daily steps in overweight and obese adults. Read full [Provisional PDF](#) in the International Journal of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity.

### **Primary prevention of overweight in children and adolescents: a meta-analysis of the effectiveness of interventions aiming to decrease sedentary behaviour (Netherlands)**

A meta-analysis by researchers from the University Medical Centre in Rotterdam found that interventions effective at reducing sedentary behaviour may also decrease Body Mass Index (BMI) in children and adolescents. The majority of studies involved children

under the age of 12 years and implemented interventions in the school setting. The behaviour was usually targeted at an individual level, such as through counselling, and parents were mostly informed via newsletters or meetings. Authors concluded that interventions aimed at decreasing levels of sedentary behaviour in the general population could help prevent children from becoming overweight since an overall decrease in sedentary behaviour and BMI was found. Read [full text](#) in BioMed Central.

## [Resources/Publications](#)

### **June 2012: The National Obesity Observatory has produced two new Standard Evaluation Frameworks:**

- Standard Evaluation Framework for **dietary interventions** - The framework identifies and explains the information that should be collected in any evaluation of an intervention that aims to improve dietary intake or associated behaviour. Click link for more information on this [framework](#) from NOO.
- Standard Evaluation Framework for **physical activity interventions** - The framework identifies and explains the information that should be collected in any evaluation of an intervention that aims to increase participation in physical activity. Click link for more information on this [framework](#) from NOO.

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## [Events](#)

### **Past:**

#### **CAWT & Early Years**

##### **Healthier Choices, Healthier Families: Showcase Event**

A cross-border showcase event was recently held in Monaghan and Londonderry in relation to the CAWT UP4IT! Obesity Project. This project has adopted a community focused, multi-faceted approach to preventing and tackling obesity within families and young children. CAWT were pleased to welcome two keynote speakers including Mr Tam Fry, Childhood Obesity Champion, Hon. Chair Child Growth Foundation as well as Professor Donal O'Shea, Consultant Endocrinologist & Physician. More information, photographs and discussion points raised at the Showcase Event can be found on the CAWT website at [www.cawt.com](http://www.cawt.com)

Through "Healthier Choices- Healthier Families" Early Years has worked with parents and children aged 0-5 years as a prevention programme with 52 families completing the programme to date as well as 8-11 year olds as a management programme with 28 families completed. For further information/photographs on our programmes as well as photographs from the Showcase Event visit our Early Years website section "Family Health Initiative" at <http://www.early-years.org/health> or Facebook page [www.facebook.com/earlyyearsorg](http://www.facebook.com/earlyyearsorg). For further information on "Healthier Choices-Healthier Families" you can contact Diane Boyd, Community Health Co-ordinator on 07791334012 or Davina Kelly on 0288554941.

### **Future:**

**13<sup>th</sup> November 2012: [Obesity and Malnutrition – the future pandemics?](#)** Hosted by the British Society of Gastroenterology and the British Association of Parental and Enteral Nutrition.

**21<sup>st</sup> November 2012: [Obesity and Physical Activity – Olympic legacy and evolving science.](#)** Hosted by the Association for the Study of Obesity.

**22<sup>nd</sup> November 2012: [Innovate to activate: New ways to promote physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour.](#)** Hosted by the British Heart Foundation National Centre for Physical Activity and Health.

Visit the **safefood** website to view a [calendar of forthcoming events](#)

### **All Island Obesity Action Forum Members**

Full details of [members](#) can be found on the Forum page of the **safefood** website