



All-island Obesity News

E-bulletin of the All-island Obesity Action Forum
Volume 3, Issue 1, January/February 2011

Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the first edition of All-island Obesity News for 2011. This edition contains a variety of information from current research, reports and resources, to events and training opportunities. We are delighted to showcase a number of initiatives from various parts of the island aimed at tackling obesity. I would encourage you to share such information and learning with us on an ongoing basis; please email the Secretariat at obesityforum@safefood.eu with any items you wish to include in future editions. The Forum will host its bi-annual workshops in June and November – further details will be announced over the coming weeks.

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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If you would like to **subscribe** to or **include any information** in this bi-monthly e-bulletin please email us at obesityforum@safefood.eu.

Obesity Prevention Steering Group NI Update

The public consultation on the *Obesity Prevention Framework for Northern Ireland-2021 - A Fitter Future for All* ended on 28 January 2011. All responses are now being considered as part of the ongoing analysis and development of the Report. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) was represented at a number of consultation events on the draft Framework, including the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) and the Northern Ireland Food Advisory Committee (NIFAC). DHSSPS also raised wider awareness of the document through Neighbourhood Renewal Groups. To

date feedback on the framework has been broadly positive and it is anticipated that, subject to approval, the final Framework will be launched in Spring 2011.

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GENERAL NEWS

February 2011: Weight of nations: a socioeconomic analysis of women in low- to middle-income countries (US)

Researchers assessed the association between socioeconomic status and BMI and overweight in low- to middle-income countries. They conducted a cross-sectional analysis of nationally representative samples of 538,140 women aged 15–49y drawn from 54 surveys conducted between 1994 and 2008. They established that higher BMI and overweight remain concentrated in higher socioeconomic groups. [Read abstract](#) in Am J Clin Nutr.

February 2011: Independent effects of age-related changes in waist circumference and BMI z scores in predicting cardiovascular disease risk factors in a prospective cohort of adolescent females (US)

Researchers found that monitoring waist circumference in addition to BMI z score has the potential to identify adolescents at risk of the emergence of cardiovascular disease risk factors, at least in white females. [Read abstract](#) in Am J Clin Nutr.

February 2011: Food insecurity and weight status among U.S. children and families – A review of the literature (US)

Food insecurity disproportionately affects U.S. demographic groups of children and adult family members at the highest risk for obesity and may lead to weight gain through various pathways. This article reviews research regarding the relationship between food insecurity and weight status, and the potential role of federal food and nutrition assistance programs. [Read abstract](#) in Am. J. Prev. Med.

February 2011: Clustering of obesity-related risk behaviors in children and their mothers (Australia)

The aim of this study was to examine the clustering and patterns of obesity-related behaviors in children and their mothers and the concordance between mother and child pairs. Clusters of healthy and unhealthy behavior were concordant in mothers and their children ($p < .0001$), particularly those defined by sedentary behaviors and consumption of energy-dense food/drink. [Read abstract](#) in Ann Epidemiol.

February 2011: Overestimation and underestimation: Adolescents' weight perception in comparison to BMI-based weight status and how it varies across socio-demographic factors (US)

This study, using a more inclusive definition of overestimation and underestimation, examines adolescents' weight perception focusing on how accurate it is in relation to body mass index (BMI)-based weight status and how it varies across socio-demographic factors. Males, minorities, and those from low-income households were more likely than their respective counterparts to have a discordant weight perception. Overall, underestimation was more prevalent than overestimation. [Read abstract](#) in J Sch Health.

26.01.11: Judging nudging - can nudging improve population health (UK)

If people didn't smoke, drank less, ate healthier diets and were more active, the huge burden of chronic diseases such as cancer, heart disease, and type 2 diabetes would be much reduced. The prospect of being able to nudge populations into changing their behaviour has generated great interest among policymakers worldwide, including the UK

government. The authors explore what nudging is and assess the prospect of nudging our way to a healthier population. [Read article](#) in BMJ.

24.01.11: Comparative effectiveness of lifestyle interventions on cardiovascular risk factors among a Dutch overweight working population: A randomized controlled trial (Neth)

The main aim of this study was to investigate lifestyle intervention effects on cardiovascular risk factors in healthy overweight employees. 276 participants were randomized to one of two intervention groups receiving a six month lifestyle intervention with behavior counseling by phone (phone group) or e-mail (Internet group), or to a control group receiving usual care. Researchers found limited evidence for their lifestyle intervention to be effective in reducing cardiovascular risk in a group of apparently healthy overweight workers. [Read abstract](#) in BMC Public Health.

23.01.11: The big issue (ROI, Sunday Business Post Agenda)

More than 300,000 children in Ireland are dangerously overweight or obese and the problem is getting worse, but to deal with the issue, parents and children must both be targeted. A mother walks into a room carrying a brown paper bag. She sits down at a table next to her young son, takes out a syringe, carefully unfolds some heroin from a strip of silver foil, ties a tourniquet around the child's arm and tucks a napkin under his chin. The scene (above) then changes to show the child eating a hamburger. On the screen, the following question appears: "You wouldn't inject your children with junk - so why are you feeding it to them?" Article by Jennifer O'Leary.

21.01.11: Weighty issue for a generation in which one in three is obese (ROI, Connaught Tribune)

In the first few weeks of the New Year, it seemed that the entire nation was embarking on a mass diet. Everywhere you turned, there were experts – some qualified and some not – giving advice about calories, 'correct' food types and fat-burning exercise. We are obsessed by weight, yet the irony is that as a nation, we have never been so fat and apart from the vanity aspect, being overweight or obese carries health risks. Two thirds of adults are either overweight or obese, according to endocrinologist Dr Francis Finucane, who leads a team based at UHG, which is dedicated to providing a medical service for people from the West of Ireland who are overweight or obese. [Read article](#) by Judy Murphy.

21.01.11: WHO recommends food marketing curbs for childhood obesity (Switzerland, Reuters)

Governments must work with industry to restrict advertising of foods high in salt, sugar and dangerous fats targeted at children to tackle an epidemic of obesity and other diseases, health officials said on Friday. The call is part of a focus on combating non-communicable diseases that are a growing cause of premature death in poor countries. [Read more](#).

20.01.11: Comparing behavioral weight loss modalities: Incremental cost-effectiveness of an internet-based versus an in-person condition (US)

A randomized controlled trial examined efficacy of a group behavioral obesity intervention across in-person and Internet treatment modalities. In-person participants had significantly greater weight losses (-8.0 ± 6.1 kg) than Internet participants (-5.5 ± 5.6 kg), whereas differences in Life Years Gained were insignificant. [Read abstract](#) in Obesity (Silver Spring).

20.01.11: Population-based trends of pregnancy outcome in obese mothers: What has changed over 15 years (Greece)

Researchers aimed to determine trends of obesity in women of reproductive age over a 15-year period, the relationship between prepregnancy weight status and pregnancy-related

outcomes, and possible changes over a 15-year period. The prevalence of overweight and obese women prior to pregnancy increased significantly between the two surveys, from 12 to 15.3% and 2.1 to 4.7%, respectively. [Read abstract](#) in Obesity (Silver Spring).

19.01.11: Psychological predictors of adiposity: Systematic review of longitudinal studies (Australia)

Evidence was mixed as to whether depressive symptoms and other negative emotional states may increase risk for adiposity gain and obesity onset within adolescence. There was some evidence for low self-esteem predicting obesity onset. Among obese adolescents, depressive symptoms exacerbated obesity, while physical appearance self-esteem exerted gender-specific adiposity changes. The literature had substantial limitations and inconsistencies. [Read abstract](#) in Int J Pediatr Obes.

18.01.11: The relative importance of predictors of body mass index change, overweight and obesity in adolescent girls (US)

Data from the NHLBI Growth and Health Study (n=2,150), a longitudinal cohort of girls, were used to identify the most important predictors of change in BMI percentile between the ages of 9 and 19 years, and second, risk for becoming overweight and obese. The five factors that best predicted change in BMI percentile (p<0.05) were related to family socio-economic position (income and parent education) and drive to restrict eating and weight (body dissatisfaction, drive for thinness and unhappiness with physical appearance). [Read abstract](#) in Int J Pediatr Obes.

18.01.11: The factors behind increasing rates of male obesity (ROI, Irish Medical News)

Being less active and eating more food has led to the average male weighing over a stone more in 2000 than he did in 1986, reflecting a rising trend in obesity rates in Ireland and the UK. This was the conclusion of a British Heart Foundation (BHF) -funded study led by Dr Peter Scarborough, PhD, senior researcher at the Department of Public Health at Oxford University, UK and published recently in the British Journal of Nutrition. [Read article](#) by Sandra O' Brien.

14.01.11: Obesity – United States, 1988 to 2008 (US)

From 1976-1980 to 2007-2008, obesity prevalence in the US increased from 15% to 34% among adults and from 5% to 17% among children and adolescents. To assess differences and trends over time in obesity prevalence and to determine whether these disparities can be attributed to differences in family income, CDC analyzed data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) III (1988--1994) and data collected in NHANES between 1999 and 2008. [Read article](#) in MMWR.

13.01.11: Projected progression of the prevalence of obesity in Australia (Australia)

Using measures of overweight and obesity incidence from a national, longitudinal study, researchers estimated the future obesity prevalence in Australian adults. If the rates of weight gain observed in the first 5 years of this decade are maintained, findings suggest that normal-weight adults will constitute less than a third of the population by 2025, and the obesity prevalence will have increased by 65%. [Read early online abstract](#) in Obesity (Silver Spring).

13.01.11: Advancing public health obesity policy through State Attorneys General (US)

Obesity in the United States exacts a heavy health and financial toll, requiring new approaches to address this public health crisis. Significant room exists for greater attorney general involvement in formulating and championing solutions to public health problems such as obesity. [Read early online abstract](#) in Am J Public Health.

11.01.11: Cost-effectiveness of diet and exercise interventions to reduce overweight and obesity (Australia)

Researchers sought to establish whether two dietary weight loss interventions-the dietary approaches to stop hypertension (DASH) program and a low-fat diet program- would be cost-effective in Australia, and to assess their potential to reduce the disease burden related to excess body weight. They concluded that diet and exercise interventions to reduce obesity are potentially cost-effective but have a negligible impact on the total body weight-related disease burden. [Read abstract](#) in Int. J. of Ob. advance online publication.

11.01.11: When do mothers think their child is overweight? (UK)

In this study, the body mass index (BMI) at which half the mothers classified their child as overweight was 21.3 (in the obese range for children of this age). The BMI at which half the mothers were concerned about their child becoming overweight in the future was 17.1 (below the overweight range). Mothers were less likely to classify girls as overweight. Mothers with higher BMIs were less likely to classify their child as overweight concerned about future overweight. [Read abstract](#) in International Journal of Obesity advance online publication.

06.01.11: Household obesity prevention: Take Action-a group-randomized trial (US)

The purpose of the present study was to evaluate an intervention to prevent weight gain among households (HHs) in the community. No significant intervention effects were observed for change in HH BMI-z score. Intervention HHs significantly reduced TV viewing, snacks/sweets intake, and dollars per person spent eating out, and increased (adults only) PA and self-weighing frequency compared with control HHs. [Read abstract](#) in Obesity (Silver Spring).

06.01.11: Worrying obesity levels in pregnant women (ROI)

One-in-six mothers who recently attended one of the country's busiest maternity hospitals in 2009 were clinically obese. The hospital delivered 8,812 babies to 8,652 mothers over the course of the year, including 152 sets of twins and four sets of triplets. [Read article](#) by Eilish O'Regan in the Irish Independent.

03.01.11: Infants not exempt from obesity epidemic (US, Medical News Today)

A revealing new study has found that obesity might begin in babies as young as nine months old. The researchers found that 31.9 percent of babies at nine months and 34.3 percent at two years of age were either at risk or obese. [Read more](#).

02.01.10: 'Great Swapathon' voucher bid to boost healthy living (England, BBC News)

Families in England are to be offered £250m in vouchers in a bid to encourage them to eat healthily and exercise. Food vouchers, nutritional advice and discounted activities are all part of Change4Life's "Great Swapathon". [Read more](#).

January 2011: The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of long-term weight management schemes for adults: a systematic review (UK)

Researchers found that long-term multi-component weight management interventions were generally shown to promote weight loss in overweight or obese adults. Weight changes were small however and weight regain was common. There is some evidence that weight management interventions are likely to be cost-effective, although caution is required as there were some limitations in the two cost-evaluation studies described. [Read abstract](#) in Health Technol Assess.

January 2011: Prevalence of cardiovascular risk factors in an urban adult population from southern Spain. IMAP Study (Spain)

In this study, researchers found a low educational level was associated with a high prevalence of cardiovascular risk factors, and this association was significant with regard to smoking, obesity, abdominal obesity and hypertriglyceridaemia. [Read abstract](#) in International Journal of Clinical Practice.

January 2011: Disparities in pediatric obesity in the United States (US)

This paper describes the disparities in the U.S. childhood obesity epidemic, mainly based on recent nationally representative data. [Read full article](#) in Adv. Nutr.

January 2011: Relative contribution of energy intake and energy expenditure to childhood obesity - a review of the literature and directions for future research (US)

On the basis of the current evidence, there is no consensus on the main driver of secular trends on weight gain among US children and adolescents. More research and better methods are needed to identify the relative contribution of energy intake and energy expenditure to obesity in the pediatric population. [Read abstract](#) in IJO.

January 2011: Self-monitoring in weight loss: A systematic review of the literature (US)

This article presents a systematic review of the literature on three components of self-monitoring in behavioural weight loss studies: diet, exercise, and self-weighing. A significant association between self-monitoring and weight loss was consistently found; however, the level of evidence was weak because of methodologic limitations. [Read abstract](#) in JADA.

January 2011: Outcome expectations and realizations as predictors of weight regain among dieters (US)

This prospective study tested whether (a) baseline outcome expectations regarding the benefits of a weight-loss diet, (b) 6-month outcome realizations regarding perceived benefits actually experienced, and/or (c) the interaction between them predicted 6-12-month weight regain among overweight/obese women randomized to one of four popular weight-loss diets (N=311). [Read abstract](#) in Eat Behav.

Jan-Feb 2011: Promising practices for the prevention and control of obesity in the worksite (US)

The aim of this study was to identify worksite practices that show promise for promoting employee weight loss. Six were identified: enhanced access to opportunities for physical activity combined with health education, exercise prescriptions alone, multicomponent educational practices, weight loss competitions and incentives, behavioral practices with incentives, and behavioral practices without incentives. [Read abstract](#) in AJHP.

Jan-Feb 2011: Effectiveness of a worksite telephone-based weight management program (US)

The purpose of this study was to examine the long-term impact of a telephone-based weight management program among participants recruited from worksite settings. Among weight management program participants, 48% of program completers and 47% of non-completers lost weight, but program completers averaged 2.6 times more weight loss than non-completers. Improvements in physical activity, eating habits, and overall health status were reported for completers. [Read abstract](#) in AJHP.

Jan-Feb 2011: Young children's weight trajectories and associated risk factors: results from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort (US)

Approximately one-third of U.S. children were either at risk or obese at 9 months (31.9%) and at 2 years (34.3%). Some children were at greater risk (e.g., Hispanics and low socioeconomic status children), while others had reduced risk (e.g., females and Asian/Pacific Islanders). [Read abstract](#) in AJHP.

29.12.10: 'I'm searching for solutions': why are obese individuals turning to the Internet for help and support with 'being fat'? (Australia)

This study explores what types of information obese individuals search for on the Internet, their motivations for seeking information and how they apply it in their daily lives. The higher the individual's weight, the more they appeared to search for weight loss solutions. [Read abstract](#) in Health Expect.

28.12.10: Long-term results of a prospective study on laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding for morbid obesity (Belgium)

The objective of this study was to study the long-term outcome of adjustable gastric banding in the treatment of morbid obesity. In Europe, the preference for gastric band has declined in favor of Roux-Y-gastric bypass. After laparoscopic gastric banding, band removal was necessary for complications or insufficient weight loss in 24% of patients. Nearly half of the patients achieved a more than 50% excess weight loss (EWL), but in 88%, a more than 10% EWL was observed. [Read early online abstract](#) in Obes Surg.

28.12.10: Behavioral and psychological factors associated with 12-month weight change in a physical activity trial (US)

Researchers conducted a physical activity (PA) intervention trial for women in which participants were assigned to one of three groups (two PA and one contact-control). Results provide further evidence for the importance of behavior in long-term weight maintenance, particularly physical activity and dietary fat. They also provide evidence for the importance of addressing psychosocial variables, in particular depressed mood and self-efficacy. [Read early online abstract](#) in J Obes.

27.12.10: Average UK male weight up 16lb in 15 years, study finds (UK, BBC News)

The average British man was more than a stone heavier in 2000 than he was in 1986, an Oxford University study found. Scientists put the average weight rise of 7.7kg (16.9lb) down to men eating more calories and taking less physical exercise than 15 years earlier. [Read more](#).

24.12.10: Associations between the home and school environments and child body mass index (US)

This paper examined associations between various aspects of home and school environments and child body mass index (BMI) in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study - Kindergarten cohort, a panel dataset of US children collected from 1998 to 2004. Greater

hours of sleep by children, more lunches eaten at school, and the adequacy of their school cafeterias and the adequacy of their school gymnasiums were all significantly associated with lower initial levels of BMI. [Read early online abstract](#) in Soc Sci Med.

17.12.10: No change in health gap between England's richest and poorest (England, Medical News Today)

Significant health inequalities still exist between the country's richest and poorest according to the latest findings from the Health Survey for England. Nearly 2 in 3 men and women in Britain are overweight, with 22% of men obese and 44% overweight. 24% of women are obese and 33% overweight. Women in the lowest income bracket are twice as likely to be obese, with a 33% prevalence rate for this group in comparison with 17% of women in the highest income bracket. [Read more](#).

16.12.10: Does parental capital influence the prevalence of child overweight and parental perceptions of child weight-level? (DK)

Parents with higher levels of cultural capital are less likely to have overweight children and more likely to perceive weight-levels in accordance with the BMI categories. Parents have a tendency to overestimate their daughters' weight-levels while underestimating the weight-levels of their sons compared to the BMI categories. [Read abstract](#) in Soc Sci Med.

15.12.10: Increase in childhood obesity renews calls for legislation on junk food marketing (UK)

The Children's Food Campaign responded to the publication of new data from the National Child Measurement Programme which showed that the proportion of children in England who are overweight or obese continues to rise. [Read more](#).

15.12.10: Early life factors and being overweight at 4 years of age among children in Malmo, Sweden (Sweden)

The results of this study showed that having overweight/obese parents was strongly associated with the child being overweight or obese. Furthermore, there was an association between unfavourable early life factors (i.e., mother smoking during pregnancy, presence of second hand tobacco smoke early in life, high birth weight) and the development of child overweight/obesity at four years of age, while breastfeeding seemed to have a protective role. [Read provisional article](#) in BMC Public Health.

14.12.10: An index of unhealthy lifestyle is associated with coronary heart disease mortality rates for small areas in England after adjustment for deprivation (Eng)

Sets of synthetic estimates of the ward-level prevalence of low fruit and vegetable consumption, obesity, raised blood pressure, raised cholesterol and smoking were combined to develop an index of unhealthy lifestyle. Multi-level regression models showed that this index described about 50% of the large-scale geographic variation in CHD mortality rates in England. [Read abstract](#) in Health Place.

08.12.10: Pharmaceutical interventions for obesity: a public health perspective (US)

Although certain nonpharmaceutical interventions have been proven efficacious in specific populations, lack of scalability has caused many of these programs to fail in sustainably decreasing the percent of patients who suffer from being overweight or obese. The benefits of other interventions, such as pharmaceutical agents, medical devices, and surgery should therefore be carefully considered: this paper focuses on the first of these strategies. [Read abstract](#) in Diabetes Obes Metab.

03.12.10: Maternal perceptions of overweight and obesity in children: A grounded theory study (UK)

Using Grounded Theory, a theoretical understanding of maternal perceptions of overweight and obesity in children was developed using the two over-arching core categories of 'Good mum/bad mum' and 'Resilience'. [Read abstract](#) in Br J Health Psychol. 2010

December 2010: Interventions aimed at decreasing obesity in children younger than 2 years: a systematic review (UK)

The aim of this systematic review was to assess the evidence for interventions designed to prevent or reduce overweight and obesity in children younger than 2 years. Intervention durations were generally less than 6 months and had modest success in affecting measures, such as dietary intake and parental attitudes and knowledge about nutrition. No intervention improved child weight status. Studies were of poor or fair quality. [Read abstract](#) in Arch Pediatr & Adolesc Med.

December 2010: Maternal BMI, parity, and pregnancy weight gain: influences on offspring adiposity in young adulthood (UK)

The aim of this study was to examine whether maternal body composition and gestational weight gain have persisting effects on offspring adiposity in early adulthood. The authors found that maternal adiposity, greater gestational weight, and parity all impact on offspring adiposity. [Read abstract](#) in J Clin Endocrinol Metab.

December 2010: Obesity and socioeconomic status in children and adolescents - United States, 2005-2008 (US)

Low income children and adolescents are more likely to be obese than their higher income counterparts, but the relationship is not consistent across race and ethnicity groups. Between 1988-1994 and 2007-2008 the prevalence of childhood obesity increased at all income and education levels. [Read more](#).

December 2010: Maintenance of weight loss after lifestyle interventions for overweight and obesity, a systematic review

This systematic review explores the relation between weight loss during an intervention and weight maintenance after at least 1 year of unsupervised follow-up. Overall, mean percentage maintenance was 54%. Weight loss during the intervention was not significantly associated with percentage maintenance. [Read abstract](#) in Obesity Reviews.

December 2010: Behavioural interventions for obese adults with additional risk factors for morbidity: systematic review of effects on behaviour, weight and disease risk factors (UK)

The aim of this study was to assess the effects of behavioural interventions for obese adults with additional risk factors for morbidity via systematic review of randomised controlled trials (RCTs). Behavioural outcomes, weight loss, and cardiovascular disease risk factors showed consistent modest improvements over time, especially for interventions targeting both diet and PA. [Read abstract](#) in Obesity Facts.

December 2010: Current knowledge of obesity's effects in the pre- and periconceptional periods and avenues for future research (US)

The authors of this paper discuss current knowledge of the pathophysiology of obesity in early reproductive events and how these events may affect reproductive outcomes including fertility and miscarriage risk. [Read abstract](#) in Am J Obstet Gynecol.

December 2010: Self-perception of weight and its association with weight-related behaviors in young, reproductive-aged women (US)

The aim of this study was to examine weight misperceptions and their predictors and association with weight-related behaviors among low-income, multiethnic, reproductive-age women. Twenty-three percent (267/1,162) of overweight and 16% (170/1,062) of normal-weight women were misperceivers. [Read abstract](#) in *Obstet Gynecol*.

December 2010: The emerging link between alcoholism risk and obesity in the United States (US)

Using data from the cross-sectional National Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiologic Survey (1991-1992) and National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (2001-2002), researchers found support for a link between familial alcoholism risk and obesity in women and possibly in men. [Read abstract](#) in *Archives of General Psychiatry*.

December 2010: Obesity under affluence varies by welfare regimes - The effect of fast food, insecurity, and inequality (UK)

The stress of being exposed to economic insecurity may mean people living in countries with so-called "free market" economies are more likely to become obese. [Read abstract](#) in *Economics & Human Biology*.

Recently published research in obesity journals

International Journal of Obesity

- [Volume 35 Issue 1](#) (January 2011)

Obesity: A Research Journal

- [Volume 19, Issue 2](#) (February 2011)
- [Volume 19, Issue 1](#) (January 2011)

Obesity Reviews

- [Volume 12, Issue 2](#) (February 2011)
- [Volume 12, Issue 1](#) (January 2011)

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NUTRITION NEWS

February 2011: Obesity-promoting food environments and the spatial clustering of food outlets around schools (NZ)

Food environments in New Zealand within walking proximity to schools are characterized by a high density of fast-food outlets and convenience stores, particularly in more-socially deprived settings. These obesogenic environments provide ready access to obesity-promoting foods that may have a negative impact on student diet and contribute to inequalities in health. [Read abstract](#) in *Am. J. Prev. Med.*

February 2011: Mandatory menu labeling in one fast-food chain in King County, Washington (US)

As part of a comprehensive effort to stem the rise in obesity, King County, Washington, enforced a mandatory menu-labeling regulation requiring all restaurant chains with 15 or more locations to disclose calorie information at the point of purchase beginning in January 2009. No impact of the regulation on purchasing behavior was found by researchers. [Read abstract](#) in *Am. J. Prev. Med.*

18.01.11: Coffee shop displays calorie content of hot drinks and snacks in trial (ROI, Irish Examiner)

The Insomnia Coffee Company started displaying the calorie content of its sandwiches, muffins and beverages at one of its Dublin chains last month. According to Insomnia chairman and Dragons Den judge Bobby Kerr, the decision was made in response to the Operation Transformation "Count Me In" campaign which aims to encourage restaurants and takeaways to display the calorie count of products. [Read article](#) by Kerrie Kennedy.

18.01.11: The impact of a workplace catering initiative on dietary intakes of salt and other nutrients: a pilot study (ROI)

The objective of the present study was to examine the impact of a structured catering initiative on food choices in a public sector workplace setting. The authors conclude that such initiatives in the workplace are a potentially important option in the promotion of healthy food choices. [Read online first abstract](#) in Public Health Nutrition.

18.01.11: Nutrition labels on pre-packaged foods: a systematic review (Canada)

The aim of this paper is to present a review research on consumer use and understanding of nutrition labels, as well as the impact of labelling on dietary habits. The authors argue that nutrition labels on pre-packaged foods are a cost-effective population-level intervention with unparalleled reach. However, to capitalize on their potential, they state that governments will need to explore new formats and different types of information content to ensure that nutrition information is accessible and understandable. [Read first view abstract](#) in Public Health Nutrition.

17.01.11: Impact of breakfast on daily energy intake - an analysis of absolute versus relative breakfast calories (Germany)

Researchers found that increasing breakfast energy was associated with greater overall intake in normal weight and obese subjects. The increasing ratio of breakfast to total daily energy intake was associated with a significant reduction of overall intake on days where post-breakfast energy was significantly reduced. [Read abstract](#) in Nutr J.

13.01.11: The 100-calorie semi-solution: sub-packaging most reduces intake among the heaviest (US)

This study addresses two questions about sub-packaging: (i) Do 100-calorie packages reduce the calorie intake of overweight individuals differently than normal-weight individuals? (ii) Do they enable individuals to accurately track intake? The authors conclude that smaller sized sub-packaging most greatly benefits those who are overweight, yet it does so without making people more aware of how much they have eaten. [Read advance online abstract](#) in Obesity.

11.01.11: Small portion sizes in worksite cafeterias: do they help consumers to reduce their food intake? (Neth)

Researchers conducted a longitudinal randomized controlled trial to assess the impact of introducing small portion sizes and pricing strategies on consumer choices. The ratio of small meals sales in relation to large meals sales was 10.2%. No effect of proportional pricing was found. The consumer data indicated that 19.5% of the participants who had selected a small meal often-to-always purchased more products than usual in the worksite cafeteria. Small meal purchases were negatively related to being male. [Read abstract](#) in Int. J. of Obes. advance online publication.

05.01.11: Communicating actionable nutrition messages: challenges and opportunities (US)

This paper reviews the dynamics that have made the communication of accurate and actionable health behaviour information an ongoing challenge, and outlines strategies for moving ahead. [Read abstract](#) in Proc Nutr Soc.

January 2011: Comparison of dietary intake of overweight postpartum mothers practicing breastfeeding or formula feeding (US)

This study, found that fully breastfeeding (BF) overweight and obese women consumed more energy than mixed breast and formula feeding (MF) or formula feeding (FF) overweight and obese women ($P < 0.001$). All groups were at risk for inadequate intakes of vitamins A, E, C, and folate and did not meet recommended servings of all food groups. [Read abstract](#) in JADA.

January 2011: Postpartum teens' breakfast consumption is associated with snack and beverage intake and body mass index (US)

Almost half (42%) of the sample in this study consumed breakfast fewer than 2 days per week. The authors conclude that although breakfast consumption among postpartum teens is low, those who regularly consume breakfast had healthier snacking behaviors and weight. [Read abstract](#) in JADA.

January 2011: Influence of parents and friends on children's and adolescents' food intake and food selection (US)

The objective of this study was to compare the effects of mothers and friends on children's and adolescents' energy intake from sandwiches and from healthy and unhealthy snacks and dessert foods. Male and female children consumed less energy from unhealthy snacks when in the presence of their mothers than when in the company of their friends. [Read abstract](#) in AJCN.

January 2011: The neighborhood food environment and adult weight status: estimates from longitudinal data (US)

Researchers used longitudinal data to consider the relationship between the neighborhood food environment and adult weight status. For residents of urban areas, the neighborhood density of small grocery stores was positively and significantly related to obesity and BMI. [Read abstract](#) in AJPH.

December 2010: Early patterns of food intake in an adolescent weight loss trial as predictors of BMI change (US)

The aim of this study was to determine whether baseline intake or initial changes in intake of fruits (F), vegetables (V), snack foods (SF), and reduced-calorie snack foods (RCSF) during standard behavioral weight loss treatment predict BMI reductions among overweight adolescents. Male gender, higher initial frequency of intake of V and increased frequency of intake of F and RCSF over the first 4 weeks of treatment accounted for 43% of the variance in BMI reduction at 16 weeks ($p < .001$). [Read abstract](#) in Eat Behav.

December 2010: Adolescents demonstrate improvement in obesity risk behaviors after completion of choice, control & change, a curriculum addressing personal agency and autonomous motivation (US)

The aim of this study was to examine the impact of a curriculum intervention, *Choice, Control & Change*, on the adoption of the energy balance-related behaviours. Students in intervention schools reported consumption of considerably fewer sweetened drinks and packaged snacks, smaller sizes of fast food, increased intentional walking for exercise, and

decreased leisure screen time, but showed no increases in their intakes of water, fruits, and vegetables. [Read abstract](#) in JADA.

December 2010: Adolescent eating in the absence of hunger and relation to discretionary calorie allowance (US)

The objective of this study was to examine eating in the absence of hunger in adolescents based on their familial predisposition to obesity and current weight status. The association between eating in the absence of hunger and weight and obesity risk status depended on adolescents' sex and could reflect emerging developmental differences, such as dieting or social desirability. [Read abstract](#) in JADA.

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PHYSICAL ACTIVITY NEWS

February 2011: Sedentary behaviors and health outcomes among adults – A systematic review of prospective studies (US)

This review aimed to systematically review the literature as to the relationship between sedentary behaviors and health outcomes considering the methodologic quality of the studies. Based on inconsistency in findings among the studies and lack of high-quality prospective studies, insufficient evidence was concluded for body weight-related measures, CVD risk, and endometrial cancer. [Read abstract](#) in Am. J. Prev. Med.

February 2011: Economic analysis of physical activity interventions (US)

This study provides a systematic review of physical activity interventions and calculates their cost-effectiveness ratios. The most cost-effective strategies were for point-of-decision prompts (e.g., signs to prompt stair use), with a median cost of \$0.07/MET-hour/day/person; these strategies had tiny effects, adding only 0.2% of minimum recommended physical activity levels. Study quality was variable, with many relying on self-reported outcomes. [Read article](#) in Am. J. of Prev. Med.

17.01.11: Effect of street connectivity and density on adult BMI: results from the Twin Cities Walking Study (US)

Data from the Twin Cities Walking Study were used to examine the effect of population density and block size on BMI. Contrary to expectations, the hypothesised most walkable neighbourhood (high density, small block stratum) had the greatest mean and median BMI. [Read online first abstract](#) in Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health.

13.01.11: More policies needed to stem car usage and encourage walking and cycling (IOI)

The continuing increase in the use of private cars for most journeys, including short and uncomplicated travel, highlights the need to strengthen policies which promote active travel – according to research by the Institute of Public Health in Ireland (IPH). The briefing paper [Active Travel – healthy lives](#) launched today shows that in the Republic of Ireland, half of all car owners in the Greater Dublin Area drive for trips of less than one mile. In Northern Ireland, car travel accounts for 50% of all journeys less than two miles and almost two thirds of journeys less than five miles. [Read more](#).

13.01.11: Association of change in daily step count over five years with insulin sensitivity and adiposity: population based cohort study (Australia)

Researchers investigated the association between change in daily step count and both adiposity and insulin sensitivity. They conclude that among community dwelling, middle aged adults, a higher daily step count at five year follow-up than at baseline was associated

with better insulin sensitivity. This effect seems to be largely mediated through lower adiposity. [Read abstract](#) in BMJ.

12.01.11: Exercise in obese pregnant women - The role of social factors, lifestyle and pregnancy symptoms (Australia)

A secondary analysis using data from an exercise intervention for the prevention of gestational diabetes in obese pregnant women found that obese pregnant women with a history of miscarriage; who had children living at home; who had a lower pre-pregnancy weight; reported no nausea and vomiting; and who had no lower back pain, were those women who were most likely to have exercised in early pregnancy. [Read provisional article](#) in BMC Pregnancy Childbirth.

11.01.11: Sedentary time and cardio-metabolic biomarkers in US adults: NHANES 2003–06 (US)

Researchers found that, independent of potential confounders and sedentary time, breaks were beneficially associated with waist circumference and C-reactive protein. [Read abstract](#) in European Heart Journal.

January 2011: The combined influence of genetic factors and sedentary activity on body mass changes from adolescence to young adulthood - the National Longitudinal Adolescent Health Study (US)

High levels of sedentary activity during adolescence may interact with genetic factors to influence body mass changes between adolescence and young adulthood, a high risk period for weight gain. Researchers found that the genetic variation in body mass changes was significantly larger in individuals with low compared with high levels of screen time ($p < 0.003$) during adolescence. [Read abstract](#) in Diabetes Metab Res Rev.

06.12.10: Physical activity during youth sports practice (US)

This study found that on average, kids enrolled in soccer, baseball or softball exercised heavily for only 45 minutes during practice - 15 minutes less than the amount recommended by national guidelines. Among girls who played softball, only 2 percent got at least 60 minutes of strong exercise during practice. [Read abstract](#) in Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine.

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RESOURCES/PUBLICATIONS

England: New from the National Obesity Observatory

[Technical Briefing: Variation in children's BMI by month of measurement](#)

This paper analyses the 2008/09 NCMP dataset to investigate whether any variation in obesity prevalence and BMI can be detected between measurements taken in different months.

[Prevalence of healthy weight in children \(NCMP 2009/10\) by local authority](#)

Visual presentation showing variation in healthy weight among children by local authority. [Participation in the 2009/10 NCMP and changes in data quality between 2006/07 and 2009/10](#)

Graphical illustrations of Primary Care Trust level participation and data quality improvements over the past four years.

[Obesity and ethnicity](#)

This paper provides an overview of the current evidence on the relationship between obesity and ethnicity for adults and children in the UK.

England: National Child Measurement Programme: England, 2009/10 school year published

This report summarises the key findings from the Government's National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) for England, in Reception (aged 4–5 years) and Year 6 (aged 10–11 years), for the 2009/10 school year. [Read more](#).

EU: High Level Conference on Monitoring and Evaluation report published

The High Level Conference on Monitoring and Evaluation of EU and Member States' strategies on nutrition, physical activity, overweight and obesity related health issues took place in Brussels on 08-09 December 2010. The Conference aimed to exchange experiences and views on the progress and the future of policies to help reduce overweight and obesity in the EU; to consolidate monitoring and evaluation processes. [Read more](#).

Int: Obesity and the economics of prevention – Fit not Fat

This book contributes to evidence-based policy making by exploring multiple dimensions of the obesity problem. It examines the scale and characteristics of the epidemic, the respective roles and influence of market forces and governments, and the impact of interventions. It outlines an economic approach to the prevention of chronic diseases that provides novel insights relative to a more traditional public health approach. [Read more](#).

IOI: 'Active travel and health on the island of Ireland'

The Institute of Public Health in Ireland (IPH) will issue a briefing paper in January 2011 entitled 'Active travel and health on the island of Ireland'. Across Ireland, there is considerable scope to replace many short car journeys with walking and cycling and doing so would bring about a range of benefits to health as well as saving money for individuals and society as a whole. The paper presents a summary of international evidence on the health and economic benefits of active travel and makes recommendations as to how active travel can become a viable, safe and attractive alternative to car use. The publication will be available at www.publichealth.ie. For further information please contact Teresa.Lavin@publichealth.ie.

ROI: Report published on the role of mass participation sporting events in making populations more active

Mass sporting events are becoming increasingly popular worldwide and may have health benefits as they foster low intensity participation in a non competitive, fun environment. Little is known, however, about their long term effect, if any, on physical activity levels. This report describes the initial impact of three women-only mass events in Ireland as well as the effectiveness of a series of initiatives designed to boost activity among the least active participants. It also presents key lessons and recommendations for all those charged with promoting physical activity in Ireland. [Read report](#).

Wales: Public health good practice scheme launched

Public Health Wales Networks have launched the Public Health Good Practice Scheme with a series of workshops across Wales. The scheme aims to recognise and support good practice in initiatives in the fields of nutrition, physical activity, mental health promotion and sexual health. A database has been developed which provides a systematic approach to sharing information about initiatives in order to prevent duplication, enhance learning and enable decisions about what initiatives to adopt or develop. [Find out more](#) about the Physical Activity and Nutrition Networks for Wales.

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CAMPAIGNS/INITIATIVES

IOI: weigh2live...update

1,900 GP surgeries across ROI are currently stocking Weigh2Live posters and leaflets with plans underway for NI dissemination. For more information visit www.weigh2live.safefood.eu.

IOI: Funding available for dietitians and nutritionists

safefood is funding a limited number of applications from dietitians and nutritionists on the island of Ireland through its Nutrition Exchange Programme. This programme offers individuals the opportunity to broaden their knowledge and expertise, while the collaborative nature enhances communication and cooperation in the nutrition field. The next deadline date for applications is 15 March 2011. [Read more.](#)

NI: FRESH (Focusing Resources on Eating and Shaping Health) initiative

FRESH (Focusing Resources on Eating and Shaping Health) is a two year community food project which aims to encourage and support members of five community groups/organisations to achieve a healthy, balanced and safe diet by providing practical community based support and advice on nutrition and healthy eating. The project is funded by the Public Health Agency and delivered by the Southern Group Environmental Health Committee in conjunction with Armagh City and District Council, Banbridge District Council, Craigavon Borough Council, Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council and Newry and Mourne District Council.

The five community groups/organisations participating in FRESH are:

- REACT, Armagh
- Seapatrick Community Association, Banbridge
- Drumellan Community Association, Craigavon
- The Vineyard Church, Dungannon and South Tyrone
- Mourne U3A, Newry and Mourne

The initiative offers a range of programmes including: Cook it!, Supermarket Tour, Weigh to Health, The Big Cook, Food Gardens and Positive Nutrition for Children and Young People.

For further information on FRESH contact Tracey Powell, Community Project Officer (Nutrition). Email: t.powell@sgehc.com or Tel: 00353(0) 28 3751 5800 or visit <http://www.sgehc.com/Fresh.aspx>.

ROI: Croí MyAction – a Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Programme

Croí MyAction is a cardiovascular disease (CVD) prevention programme, that targets individuals and their families at high risk of developing heart disease, stroke, peripheral artery disease and diabetes in a community based setting. It was launched in June 2009 and it is collaboration between Croí, West of Ireland Cardiac Foundation, Health Service Executive West Galway Primary, Community and Continuing Care (PCCC) and Imperial College London. Croí MyAction offers high-risk participants a 12-16 week intensive lifestyle programme, working across risk factors such as cholesterol, blood pressure, physical inactivity, weight and smoking. Based on the stage of change, realistic and achievable goals are set with the individual and these goals are reviewed on a weekly basis. Each participant receives a personal record card and supporting information which is continuously reviewed at weekly supervised exercise and education sessions. A food diary and activity diary are maintained, to encourage self-monitoring and awareness. The programme is protocol driven and outcomes are measured both at end of programme and at one year. To date over 350 families (520 individuals) have been referred to the programme and significant results have been achieved in relation to diet, exercise levels, weight and waist circumference. These substantial results observed in the short term (16-weeks) are being

sustained at one-year follow-up, demonstrating the longer term impact of the programme. To download the summary and findings of Croí MyAction, log onto www.croi.ie.

ROI: Irish Cancer Society's Community Health Education Programme 2011

According to the World Cancer Research Fund there are a number of things we can all do to reduce our risk of cancer. One of the most important is to be a healthy weight. In an effort to get this important message to communities across Ireland the Irish Cancer Society has developed its Community Health Education Programme (CHEP). The key aims of the programme are to inform people that lifestyle changes, including being a healthy weight, can reduce cancer risk by as much as 50% and that knowing the early signs of cancer can save lives. The Irish Cancer Society needs people who are interested in getting out there and telling others about these facts. To become a CHEP volunteer you need to attend a two day training programme. The training dates for 2011 are:

(1) 04-05 February, (2) 08-09 April and (3) 16-17 September. You don't need to have medical training to become a CHEP volunteer; however a number of qualities are important, they include:

- Being able to deliver a talk or provide information at a stand while sticking to the Irish Cancer Society messages
- Having good communication skills is a help but training will be given in this area so a willingness to learn is vital
- Reliability and being able to organise and keep records

If you are passionate about getting positive messages out to adults, from all backgrounds, and empowering them to make change in their lives this programme could be for you. To find out more about becoming a CHEP Volunteer contact: Rosemary Scott, Health Promotion Officer, Irish Cancer Society, 43-45 Northumberland Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. Email: rscott@irishcancer.ie. Telephone: 00353 (0)1 2310579.

ROI: safefood sponsor Operation Transformation

safefood continues to support the popular RTE lifestyle programme "Operation Transformation" which is over half way through its eight-week run. Live Facebook chats via the Operation Transformation website are hosted by experts from **safefood** and the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute around each episode.

ROI: Irish Sports Council support Operation Transformation at local level

The Irish Sports Council is supporting Operation Transformation through the organization of mass participation events during January and February. The events are being rolled out by the Local Sports Partnership network and are free to attend and will be promoted on the show and both the RTE and Irish Sports Council websites. [Find out more.](#)

ROI: Research team from Waterford Institute of Technology, Irish Sports Council and University of Sydney find evidence to support mass participation events

The annual Christmas weight gain, subsequent and related New Year's Resolutions and the timely appearance of Operation Transformation on our TV screens suggest that there is a greater motivation than usual among Irish people to be healthy and active at this particular time of year. A series of walks, runs and other sporting events are being scheduled nationwide in partnership with the Irish Sports Council to tap into this enthusiasm. This move to promote collective, fun forms of physical activity may be a very worthwhile endeavour, particularly as such initiatives have been identified as a viable physical activity promotion strategy in an Irish context. Specifically, research has shown that the annual Women's Mini Marathon held in Dublin and Cork has a positive impact on the physical activity levels of all participants, elite and otherwise, prior to and after the event (Lane et al., 2010). [Read more.](#)

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FUNDING

NI: Building the Community Pharmacy Partnership (BCPP) Programme- Funding Available

Community Development and Health Networks (CDHN)'s Building the Community Pharmacy Partnership programme promotes and supports communities and pharmacists to work together to address local health needs using a community development approach. There are two levels of funding available. Level 1 funding is for those interested in developing ideas and a community pharmacy partnership. It consists of a maximum of £2000 for a project that can last for up to 9 months. The closing date for Level 1 funding is **10 March 2011**. Level 2 funding is for those with established partnerships who have a clear vision of what the project wants to achieve. It consists of a maximum of £10,000 for a project that can last up to 2 years. The closing date for Level 2 funding is **20 April 2011**. [Find out more](#).

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TRAINING

Title: [Health Impact Assessment \(HIA\) Training Course](#)
Date: 21-23 March 2011
Venue: Holiday Inn, Ormeau Avenue, Belfast.

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CONSULTATIONS

UK: Revised Food Standards Agency Strategy for 2010 to 2015

The Strategic Plan for 2010-2015, published in December 2009, sets out the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) strategic direction and the outcomes and priorities the FSA is working to achieve. The FSA's Science and Evidence Strategy 2010-2015 was developed in parallel with the Strategic Plan, and was published in February 2010. The consultation identifies changes which will be required to the high-level structure of the strategy in order to reflect the proposed changes to the Strategic Plan. Responses are required by close on **Friday 11 February 2011**. [Read more](#).

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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

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ALL-ISLAND OBESITY ACTION FORUM MEMBERS

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

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