



All-island Obesity News

E-bulletin of the All-island Obesity Action Forum
Volume 3, Issue 5, September/October 2011

Dear colleagues,

Welcome to this edition of All-island Obesity News. I am happy to announce that the Forum's next workshop '**Counting up the Pounds**' will take place in Dublin on Tuesday 15th November. It will focus on the economic cost of obesity and will be hosted by the All-island Obesity Action Forum, supported by **safefood** and the **HRB Centre for Health and Diet Research**. The aim of the event is to highlight existing and forthcoming data on the economic cost of obesity, discuss the implications of this data and how it can be used to maximum effect. Keynote speakers include Dr Tim Lobstein (IASO) and Dr Anne Dee/ Professor Ivan Perry from the HRB Centre for Health and Diet Research. This event will provide a platform for information sharing, networking and collaboration.

This edition of *All-island Obesity News* is packed with news, research updates and events relevant to the obesity agenda. The first section contains items directly submitted by Forum members. As usual 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.

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.

[Update from Forum Members:](#)

safefood -

Operation Transformation-

Operation Transformation is back for a 5th series and the search has begun for 5 leaders to lead the nation by following the Operation Transformation health and fitness plan.

This year, Operation Transformation is also looking for more families to get involved. [Visit the Operation Transformation website for information on how to apply.](#)

Food on a Low Income – Four Households Tell their Story.

Safefood are hosting this event which sees the launch of new **safefood** research examining food on a low income on the island of Ireland. This project has enabled an exploration of the “why” behind the statistics around poverty and food. This research sought to investigate the everyday experiences of food among people in four household types (families with children, single men, older people and lone parents). The event will be held on Wednesday 2nd November 2011 in Belfast. For further information keep an eye on the events section at safefood.eu/professional

30+ MLAs sign up to Stormont Weight loss programme

Safefood are working with 37 cross- party members of the legislative assembly, to deliver an 8 week weight loss and healthy lifestyle programme beginning on the 20th September 2011. This programme forms part of a two year all island ‘stop the spread’ campaign which encourages people to measure their waist to see if they are overweight.

Sport Northern Ireland –

Sports NI have created a factsheet highlighting the importance of sport's positive contribution to public health, particularly with managing weight. [See factsheet for further information.](#)

Irish Heart Foundation (IHF) -

The Irish Heart Foundation has now launched its new heart healthy cookbook, with easy to make, affordable and delicious recipes. Packed with recipes for any occasion and some from familiar celebrities including Nicky Byrne and Rosanna Davison and award-winning chefs like Neven Maguire, this cookbook would make an ideal gift - keep it in mind for birthdays and your Christmas list! The cookbook is available from the Irish Heart Foundation at www.irishheart.ie or 01 668 5001 or from all good bookstores.

Nutrition and Health Foundation (NHF) -

On the 18th October the NHF are hosting a seminar on innovations to tackle obesity in Dublin in the Guinness Storehouse, St. James Gate, Dublin 8. [See website for more information.](#)

Health Services Executive (HSE) –

The redeveloped <http://www.getirelandactive.ie/> site will be launched on October 5th in Dublin's City Hall. Guest speakers include Dr. Nazih Eldin, Mary Davis, John Treacy, Ronan Scully and Dr. Ailis Brosnan.

The website is designed to encourage people to become more active by:

- creating awareness of the range of activities and opportunities for physical activity that exist locally, regionally and nationally; and
- providing advice on how to get started, tips on how to get more active and motivation to keep them going.

For event organisers, the website provides a unique opportunity to promote their activity to an online audience. Because the HSE is working in partnership with the Local Sports Partnerships to both moderate and promote the site, we are confident that the site will provide a comprehensive list of physical activity opportunities at county, region and national level.

CAWT – Cooperation and Working Together –

CAWT have published Issue 2 of the CAWT Obesity Project UP4IT! Newsletter which has some information on the organisations delivering the prevention and management programmes in the four pilot sites along the border region. Read [newsletter](#) here.

[General News](#)

October 2011: Four-Year Weight Losses in the Look AHEAD Study: Factors Associated With Long-Term Success

This report provides a further analysis of the year 4 weight losses in the Look AHEAD (Action for Health in Diabetes) study and identifies factors associated with long-term success. A total of 5,145 overweight/obese men and women with type 2 diabetes were randomly assigned to an intensive lifestyle intervention (ILI) or a usual care group, referred to as Diabetes Support and Education (DSE). As reported previously, at year 4, ILI participants lost an average of 4.7% of initial weight, compared with 1.1% for DSE. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

September 2011: NCMP analysis using the ONS Area Classification (UK)

This report explores child obesity prevalence (using National Child Measurement Programme data) by geographic population sub-groups that are based on socio-demographic characteristics (Office for National Statistics Area Classification). The analysis highlights health inequalities that exist between different population groups and identifies the likely level of obesity within local neighbourhoods and populations. [Read more](#).

29.09.11: Cross-Sectional Comparisons of BMI and Waist Circumference in British Children: Mixed Public Health Messages (UK)

Research suggests that there has been a levelling off in obesity prevalence occurring in the child population. However, a concern with the evidence base is that all of the studies have relied upon the use of BMI. The purpose of this study was to compare waist circumference (WC), BMI, and waist-to-height ratio (WHtR) data in three different sample of children. Results show obesity prevalence defined by WC was considerably higher especially, in girls. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

29.09.11: Is Maternal Diabetes A Risk Factor For Childhood Obesity?

This study was carried out with primarily African-American population. Results found diabetes in pregnancy to be significantly related to childhood obesity at age 2-5 years. Well-controlled diabetes during pregnancy that avoids Macrosomia may lead to prevention of future childhood obesity as well. [Read more](#) in the Journal of Maternal-Fetal and Neonatal medicine.

21.09.11: Key stakeholders' perspectives towards childhood obesity treatment: A qualitative study. (UK)

This study provides a qualitative, in-depth, analysis of stakeholders' (children, parents and health professionals) perspectives toward the efficacy of childhood obesity treatment interventions. It gives an insight into issues of stakeholder involvement in the obesity intervention design and delivery process. [Read abstract](#) in the Journal of Child Health Care.

13.09.11: The validity and reliability of weight and height measurements and body mass index calculations in early pregnancy. (UK)

The study investigated the number of pregnant women who took part in an audit, to determine the extent of compliance with having their height, weight and their body mass index (BMI) measured. The results found measurements of height, weight and calculation of BMI were not always followed. Where BMI was recorded, many notes had

either height or weight missing or had measurements recorded in imperial units. [Read abstract](#) in PubMed.

12.09.11: Genes and obesity: a cause and effect relationship. (Spain)

This study describes the associations between genes and obesity. Only a small number of cases of obesity (5%) result from mutations in specific genes (monogenic obesity), causing in some cases Mendelian syndromes with a very low incidence in the population. One hundred and thirty genes related to obesity have been reported. [Read abstract](#) in PubMed.

02.09.11: Children's understandings' of obesity, a thematic analysis. (UK)

This thematic analysis examined the concepts and themes that make up children's understandings of the causes and consequences of obesity. The four focus groups suggest that the key concepts that contribute to children's understandings of obesity are "Knowledge through Education," "Role Models," "Fat is Bad," and "Mixed Messages.". Read [full text](#) in PubMed.

01.09.11: What the UK public believes causes obesity, and what they want to do about it: A cross-sectional study. (UK)

This cross-sectional study involved 500 adults from the UK completing questionnaires about beliefs concerning the causes of excess weight, and support for particular policy interventions. Results suggested that support for policy interventions was greatest when responsibility was attributed to factors beyond individual control, with support for child-focused interventions particularly high. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

01.09.11: Global prevalence of overweight and obesity in preschoolers.

Twenty-three studies reporting cross-sectional and longitudinal data were conducted in 14 different countries between 1998 and 2008. Studies used both International Obesity Task Force (IOTF), World Health Organization (WHO)) and national reference standards to classify children as overweight or obese. Results show an increase in the prevalence of overweight/obesity. [Read more](#).

August 2011: Effect of Pre pregnancy Maternal Overweight and Obesity on Pregnancy Outcome. (Denmark)

The study estimates the association between maternal overweight and obesity on complications during pregnancy and delivery in Denmark. The results show a significant increased risk of a wide variety of pregnancy, birth, and neonatal complications in overweight, obese, and severely obese women. [Read abstract](#) in PubMed.

August 2011: Comparison in maternal body composition between Caucasian Irish and Indian women. (Ireland)

The aim of this prospective study was to compare maternal body composition in early pregnancy between Caucasian Irish and Indian women. At any given BMI, the Indian women had a higher total body fat percentage, visceral fat level and high fat percentage than the Irish women ($p = 0.024, 0.001$ and 0.001 , respectively). Our findings suggest that lower BMI cut-offs should be used for screening for gestational diabetes mellitus in Indian women attending our antenatal services. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

August 2011: Faster self-reported speed of eating is related to higher body mass index in a nationwide survey of middle-aged women. (New Zealand)

This cross-sectional study assessed the relationship between self-reported speed of eating and BMI in a nationally representative sample of women. BMI statistically significantly increased by 2.8% for each category increase in self-reported speed of eating. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

31.08.11: The consequences of obesity and excess weight gain in pregnancy. (UK)

This paper provides a review of the strong links between obesity and adverse pregnancy outcome which operate across a range of pregnancy complications. Maternal obesity programmes a variety of long-term adverse outcomes, including obesity in the offspring at adulthood. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

26.08.11: Fat, pregnant or both? (BBC News)

Nearly half of women of childbearing age are overweight or obese in the UK and this means there are increasing numbers of obese pregnant women. But spotting those mothers whose bumps are due to fat as well as baby is difficult, not least because there are no UK guidelines on how much weight women should gain during pregnancy. Read [news article](#) on the BBC News page.

27.08.11: The global obesity pandemic: shaped by global drivers and local environments.

The simultaneous increases in obesity in almost all countries seem to be driven mainly by changes in the global food system, which is producing more processed, affordable, and effectively marketed food than ever before. This passive overconsumption of energy leading to obesity is a predictable outcome of market economies predicated on consumption-based growth. Read [Summary](#) in The Lancet.

27.08.11: Health and economic burden of the projected obesity trends in the USA and the UK.

In this report, a simulation model projects the probable health and economic consequences in the next two decades from a continued rise in obesity in the USA and the UK. These trends project 65 million more obese adults in the USA and 11 million more obese adults in the UK by 2030. Read [summary](#) in Lancet.

24.08.11: Factors associated with parental recognition of a child's overweight status – a cross sectional study.

This cross-sectional study analyses the factors associated with a parent's ability to recognise their own offspring's overweight status. The findings show Fifty-seven percent (69/120) of the parents of the overweight children considered their child as normal weight. Overweight boys were less likely to be recognised than overweight girls. [Read full text article](#) in the BMC Public Health

22.08.11: Tracking of obesity-related behaviours from childhood to adulthood: A systematic review (UK)

This is the first systematic review to track both dietary and physical activity behaviours (the two major determinants of energy balance and hence obesity risk) from childhood to adulthood. Both food choice and physical activity are modifiable behaviours and changing those towards more healthful behaviours in childhood may lead to more healthful adult behaviours and so to reduced risk of obesity and of obesity-related disease. [Read abstract](#) in PubMed.

04.08.11: Longitudinal associations between family characteristics and measures of childhood obesity. (Finland)

This study was conducted to examine the associations between different family characteristics and BMI and waist-to-height ratio (WHtR) in children. It found that several family characteristics (including more meals together with the family, more parenting practices at meals, less time home without adult company after school etc) predicted child BMI 2 years later. Fewer associations were found to WHtR. [Read abstract](#) in PubMed.

02.08.11: The association between weight loss and engagement with a web-based food and exercise diary in a commercial weight loss programme: A retrospective analysis. (United Kingdom)

The aim of this study was to assess associations between engagement with self-monitoring tools and social support, and weight loss in an online weight-control programme. It found that programme engagement was associated with weight loss in both men and women after controlling for initial BMI and duration of participation. Authors concluded that the use of self-monitoring tools and participation in online support are predictive of weight loss in the context of a commercial, online weight control programme. Read [provisional abstract](#) in International Journal of Behavioral nutrition and physical activity.

02.08.11: Waist circumference and risk of elevated blood pressure in children: a cross-sectional study. (Taiwan)

This cross-sectional study reports associations between schoolchildren's waist circumference (WC) and risk of elevated blood pressure. After examining 2,334 school children it was found that the mean of systolic and diastolic blood pressure increased as WC quartiles increased ($p < 0.0001$). Read provisional [full text article](#) in BMC Public Health.

July/August 2011: Maternity services for obese women in Ireland (Ireland)

The purpose of this survey was to audit the services and facilities for obese pregnant women in the country's maternity units. In June 2010, a detailed questionnaire was sent to all 20 units which included questions on services, equipment and facilities for obese women. All 20 units responded: 17 (85%) were calculating and recording Body Mass Index in pregnancy. Only 15 (75%) were screening obese women for gestational diabetes mellitus. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

July 2011: Does maternal weight gain in pregnancy have long-term effects on offspring adiposity? A sibling study in a prospective cohort of 146,894 men from 136,050 families. (UK)

A small number of relatively small studies have found greater gestational weight gain to be associated with greater offspring BMI (BMI; in kg/m²), but whether this association is caused by intrauterine mechanisms or by shared genetic and environmental risk factors for adiposity is unclear. Read [full text article](#) in American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

July 2011: Ratio of weight to height gain: a useful tool for identifying children at risk of becoming overweight or obese at preschool age. (Brazil)

The study analyzed the usefulness of the weight gain/height gain ratio from birth to two and three years of age as a predictive risk indicator of excess weight at preschool age. Findings suggest that regardless of weight or length at birth, the mean ratio between the weight gain per g/cm of height growth from birth presented a strong correlation with the BMI of preschool children. These results suggest that this ratio may be a good indicator of the risk of excess weight and obesity in preschool-aged children. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

May 2011: Effects of active video games on body composition: a randomized controlled trial. (New Zealand)

The aim of this study was to evaluate the effect of active video games over a 6-month period on weight, body composition, physical activity, and physical fitness. An active video game intervention has a small but definite effect on BMI and body composition in overweight and obese children. Read [article](#) in full in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

April 2011: Obesity in the news: do photographic images of obese persons influence antifat attitudes?

This study used a randomized experimental design to examine whether viewing photographic portrayals of an obese person in a stereotypical or unflattering way could increase negative attitudes about obesity. Results indicated that participants who viewed the negative photographs expressed more negative attitudes toward obese people than did those who viewed the positive photographs. Read [abstract](#) in journal of health Communications

Nutrition News

October 2011: Consumer estimation of recommended and actual calories at fast food restaurants (US)

Recently, localities across the United States have passed laws requiring the mandatory labelling of calories in all chain restaurants, including fast food restaurants. This study uses receipt and survey data collected from consumers outside fast food restaurants in low-income communities in New York City (NYC) (which implemented labelling) and a comparison community (which did not) The study found food labelling did increase the number of low-income consumers who correctly estimated (within 100 calories) the number of calories in their fast food meal, from 15% before labelling in NYC increasing to 24% after labelling. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

26.09.11: School health guidelines to promote healthy eating and physical activity. (US)

The National Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion has synthesized research and best practices related to promoting healthy eating and physical activity in school. The guidelines serve as the foundation for developing, implementing, and evaluating school-based healthy eating and physical activity policies and practices for students. Read [guidelines](#) in Division of Adolescent and School Health, National Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

September 2011: Child and Adolescent Exposure to Food and Beverage Brand Appearances during Prime-Time Television Programming (US)

The aim of this study was to quantify incidence and youth exposure to food and beverage brand appearances within shows on prime time TV. Results showed food, beverage, and restaurant brands appeared a total of 35,000 times within prime-time TV programming. Read [full text article](#) in American Journal of Preventive Medicine.

09.09.11: Portion Control for the Treatment of Obesity in the Primary Care Setting. (US)

This study randomized 65 obese patients' BMI ≥ 30 and < 40 to an intervention including counselling by a dietitian incorporating a portion control plate or to usual care. Subjects in the portion control intervention had a greater percentage change in weight from baseline at 3 months. This suggests portion control intervention incorporating dietary counselling and a portion control plate may be effective for enhancing weight loss among obese subjects. Read [full text article](#) in BioMed Central.

05.09.11; McDonalds to display calorie counts on in-store menus. (UK)

For the first time, McDonald's is going to display calorie information on its menus. The fast food firm, which has 1,200 restaurants in the UK, has agreed to join the government-backed scheme. Read [news article](#) in BBC News.

27.08.11: Skipping breakfast and prevalence of overweight and obesity in Asian and Pacific regions: A meta-analysis

In Western countries, skipping breakfast is associated with a high prevalence of overweight and obesity. This meta-analysis aimed to determine if the same relationship exists in Asian and Pacific regions. From the nineteen studies reviewed, the findings suggest that a positive association between skipping breakfast and overweight and obesity is globally observed regardless of cultural diversity among countries. [Read abstract](#) in PubMed.

26.08.11: Does the sale of sweetened beverages at school affect a child's weight. (US)

In response to the increase in children's weight in recent decades, many states, school districts, and schools in the United States have limited or eliminated the sale of sweetened beverages at school. This study explores the relationship between children's access to sweetened beverages at school in the 5th and 8th grade, their purchases and total consumption of these beverages, and their weight. [Read abstract](#) in Science Direct.

25.08.11: Future heart health 'shaped by diet' (BBC news)

Growing up starved of calories may give you a higher risk of heart disease 50 years on, research suggests. Researchers in The Netherlands tracked the heart health of Dutch women who lived through the famine at the end of World War II. Those living on rations of 400-800 calories a day had a 27% higher risk of heart disease in later life. Read [news article](#) on the BBC news website.

22.08.11: Parental feeding behaviours and motivations. A qualitative study in mothers of UK pre-schoolers (UK)

Parental feeding behaviours are considered major influences on children's eating behaviour. The present study obtained interview and diary data on specific feeding behaviours and underlying motivations from 22 mothers of predominantly healthy weight 3-5 y olds in the UK. Parents described a wide range of efforts to promote or restrict intake that were largely motivated by practical and health considerations and only rarely by concern about weight. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

15.08.11: Caffeine and screen time in adolescence; associations with short sleep and obesity. (US)

The aim of this study was to investigate the associations between sleep duration and obesity incidence and risk factors among pre-adolescents and adolescents. It involved the participation 319 Caucasian and Hispanics between 10-17 years. Findings suggest that a decrease in Total Sleep Time (TST) and increased caffeine intake and screen time may result in higher obesity risk in the adolescent population. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

July 2011: The Impact of an Elementary After-School Nutrition and Physical Activity Program on Children's Fruit and Vegetable Intake, Physical Activity, and Body Mass Index: Fun 5 (Hawaii)

This study evaluated the impact of the Fun 5 program on fruit and vegetable intake, physical activity, and BMI percentile of overweight and obese children in Hawaii's A+ After-School Program. The study showed 'The Fun 5' program had an impact on improving fruit and vegetable intake and physical activity on the at risk population. Read [full text article](#) in Hawaii's Medical Journal.

19.07.11: Does access to fast food lead to super-sized pregnant women and whopper babies? (United States)

This study examines the relationship between the supply of fast-food restaurants and weight gain of pregnant women and their newborns. Results showed that greater access to fast-food restaurants is positively related to mothers' probability of excessive weight gain but it does not share a statistically significant relationship with birth weight. These relationships hold in all the socioeconomic and demographic subgroups studied. Read [abstract](#) in Science Direct.

Physical Activity News

September 2011: Postpartum physical activity in overweight and obese women (US)

This study was to investigate Physical Activity and determine the proportion of women meeting recommendations for Physical Activity. Results showed only 34% met national PA guidelines; this proportion was significantly lower among blacks. Read [abstract](#) in the Journal of Physical Activity and Health.

September 2011: How to make overweight children exercise and follow the recommendations.

This report found that perceived competence could increase motivation in overweight children to participate in physical activities. By offering activities tailored to the capabilities of the overweight child, helping the children set realistic goals, learning the children self-management skills, providing the children with appropriate feedback and organizing separate exercise sessions will encourage them. [Read abstract](#) in the International Journal of Paediatric Obesity.

26.09.11: Physical activity for obese individuals: a systematic review of effects on chronic disease risk factors

The purpose of this review was to determine the effectiveness of physical activity in improving chronic disease risk factors in obese individuals. Forty-four studies met the inclusion criteria for this review. Overall, physical activity had no more than a modest effect on chronic disease risk factors in obese individuals. In many studies it was difficult to determine the effect of physical activity, independent of changes in body mass consequent to the intervention. [Read more](#) in PubMed.

23.09.11: Exercise among Commercial Truck Drivers.

This study examined the exercise habits and perceived barriers to exercise of a convenience sample of 300 commercial truck drivers. A high prevalence of obesity was found in this sample: 93.3% of study participants had a BMI of 25 or higher. Participants reported minimal amounts of exercise, with nearly 20% not exercising in the past week. Most drivers cited lack of time and place as the primary barriers to exercising. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

20.09.11: Screen time and physical activity behaviours are associated with health-related quality of life in Australian adolescents. (Australia)

This cross-sectional study explored the relationships between health-related quality of life (HRQoL) and physical activity (PA) behaviours and screen-based media (SBM) use among a sample of Australian adolescents. It concluded that several of the relationships between low PA and high SBM use and HRQoL were comparable to those previously observed between chronic disease conditions and HRQoL, indicating that these behaviours deserve substantial attention. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

May 2011: Political activity for physical activity: health advocacy for active transport. (New Zealand)

The aim of the current study was to describe features of advocacy for active transport via submissions to city council annual plans in New Zealand, and the impact of an information sheet to encourage the health sector to be involved in this process. The study provides novel information about the current nature of health advocacy for active transport and informs future advocacy efforts about areas for emphasis, such as health benefits of active transport, and potential alliances with other sectors such as environmental sustainability, transport and urban planning and local communities. Read [full article](#) from International Journal of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity.

Resources/Publications

24.08.11: BMI iPhone application (NHS)

This iPhone application was created by NHS choices and is available to download from the iTunes store. It allows you to calculate BMI for anyone aged two and over. You can also use the app to track your weight and BMI as it changes over time. You can set up multiple user profiles, making the app great if you want to measure and track BMI for every member of your family. [Read more](#).

June 2011: A simply guide to classifying Body Mass Index in children.

This paper provides a simple guide on how BMI can be used to assess the weight status of children. It describes the different methods that can be used to interpret BMI in children and young people, explains how the methods differ, and where each method is commonly used. [Read report](#).

September 2011: Evaluation data collection tool

This tool will assist practitioners to collect standardised summary data from any weight management, diet or physical activity intervention. The tool is an on-line questionnaire and is designed to collect evaluation data from interventions using the NOO Standard Evaluation Framework (SEF), however it can be used to collect data from any weight management, diet or physical activity intervention. [Read more](#) in the National Obesity Observatory.

Child obesity statistics for PCT Clusters (UK)

A set of maps and charts illustrating the variation in child obesity and healthy weight across the new Primary Care Trust (PCT) clusters in England. It also illustrates the relationship between obesity prevalence and level of socio-economic deprivation, and describes the level of participation in the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) for all PCT clusters. [Read more](#) in the Nation Obesity Observatory.

Forthcoming Events

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.