



All-island Obesity News

E-bulletin of the All-island Obesity Action Forum
Volume 3, Issue 6, November/December 2011

Dear colleagues,

Welcome to this edition of All-island Obesity News. Since the last edition, the All-island Obesity Action Forum has hosted its seventh workshop entitled 'Counting up the Pounds', focusing on the economic cost of obesity. This year the event was supported by **safefood** and the **HRB Centre for Health and Diet Research** and it saw presentations from speakers such as Dr. Tim Lobstein from the International Association for the Study of Obesity (IASO), and Roisin Shortall, Minister of State, Department of Health with responsibility for Primary Care. We were greatly encouraged by the success of the Forums seventh workshop, in terms of the attendance, interaction and feedback.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and best wishes for 2012. Thank you for your continued support for the Forum.

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:](#)

Sports Northern Ireland (Sport NI) -

On the 17th November a report was launched by Sport Northern Ireland, the Public Health Agency and the UKCRC Centre of Excellence for Public Health (NI) providing a complete picture of adult participation in sport and physical activity across Northern Ireland. The report found that most adults in Northern Ireland are not active enough to maintain general health. Only 35% of NI adults achieve the required 30 minutes activity on at least five days per week. Read full report on the [Sport NI website](#).

Nutrition and Health Foundation (NHF)

Fourth Annual Seminar

- On the 17th October the NHF hosted the fourth annual seminar 'Innovations in tackling obesity'. It was the largest NHF events to date with attendance far exceeding expectations. Lots of positive feedback was received, especially due to informative presentations from different fields of interest. The event was opened by John McGrath (Dawn Farm Foods). There were many speakers involved including Minister Jimmy Deenihan, T.D. (Minister for Arts Heritage, and the Gaeltacht) and Dr. Tony Holohan (Dept of Health) to name but a few. See [website](#) for more information

Irish Times/Pfizer Health Forum Obesity - is it spreading?

- This forum's theme focused on "Obesity in Ireland – Is it spreading?". Mr. Fintan O' Toole, Assistant Editor of the Irish Times chaired the event, Dr. Muireann Cullen, manager of the NHF was a panellist alongside Prof. Patrick Wall, Associate Professor of Public Health, School of Public Health and Population Science, UCD, Prof. Donal O'Shea, Consultant Endocrinologist and Director of the Weight Management Clinic at St. Colmcille's Hospital in Loughlinstown and Minister Frances Fitzgerald, T.D., Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. This fourth and final forum of the 2011 Pfizer Health Forums Series in association with the Irish Times was held in the Royal College of Surgeons, Dublin on the 16th of November.

Irish Heart Foundation (IHF)

Workplace Award for Healthy Eating

- Over 60 Irish companies employing almost 40,000 employees were applauded for their efforts to promote heart-healthy eating for employees at the IHF Happy Heart Healthy Eating Awards 2011. The Awards, which are supported by the HSE, accredit workplaces that provide and promote healthy eating options in their staff restaurants, as recommended by the IHF and the Department of Health and Children. 300 companies nationwide are currently certified.

New pan-European report calls for tougher regulation of the food industry to tackle Europe's health crisis

- The IHF welcomes and strongly endorses an alarming report by the European Heart Network (EHN), which calls for policy makers to take decisive action in the face of disturbing facts on the impact of diet and physical activity on coronary heart disease and stroke (CVD) in Europe. See link to report in the publications section.

[General News](#)

26.11.11: UK women are 'fattest in Europe' (BBC News)

The UK has more obese women than any other country in Europe, according to European Union figures. Data agency [Eurostat](#), which looked at 19 countries, found nearly a quarter of UK women - 23.9% - were recorded as being obese in the year 2008 to 2009. Just over 22% of UK men were classed as obese, coming second only to Malta. Read [new article](#) in full on the BBC News website

25.11.11: Is dieting behaviour decreasing in young adolescents? (UK)

The aim of this study is to report trends in underweight, overweight and obesity in 12–15-year-old adolescents and examine changes in dieting behaviour. Overweight and obesity increased in girls from 15% to 23% and 2% to 6%, respectively. Increases were more modest in boys with overweight increasing from 13% to 18% and obesity from 3% to 6%. The proportion of underweight adolescents decreased from 9% to 6% in girls and 8% to 5% in boys. Read [abstract](#) in Public Health Nutrition.

24.11.11: Parents' views and experiences of childhood obesity management in primary care: a qualitative study (UK)

This study conducted in-depth interviews with 15 parents of obese children aged 5-10 years, to explore their views and experiences of primary care childhood obesity management. Parents viewed primary care as an appropriate setting in which to treat childhood obesity but were reluctant to consult due to a fear of being blamed for their child's weight and a concern about their child's mental well-being. They also questioned whether practitioners had the knowledge, time and resources to effectively manage childhood obesity. Read [abstract](#) in Pub Med.

21.11.11: Overweight and obesity knowledge prior to pregnancy: a survey study

This cross-sectional survey was aimed to assess current levels of overweight and obesity knowledge in a pregnant population. Over 75% of respondents identified that obese women have an increased risk of overall complications, including gestational diabetes and hypertensive disorders of pregnancy compared to women of normal weight. Women were less likely to know about neonatal complications (19.7% did not know about the effect of obesity on these) than maternal complications (7.4%). Read [abstract](#) in the BMC pregnancy and childbirth

21.11.11: Impact of childhood obesity treatment on body composition and metabolic profile (Finland).

The aim of this study was to compare the impact of a group program and routine counselling on body composition and metabolic profile, and to evaluate the associations of changes in adiposity with levels of cardio-metabolic risk factors. Waist/height decreased more in the children attending the group treatment, but there were no significant differences between treatment arms in the changes of metabolic risk factors. Read [abstract](#) in Pub Med.

16.11.11: Obesity Predicts Primary Health Care Visits: A Cohort Study (Canada)

The objective of this study was to explore the relationship between BMI, its association with chronic disease, and its impact on health services utilization in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada from 1998 to 2002. Self-reported height and weight measures and other covariates, including chronic diseases, were obtained from a survey. Of the sample, 37% of individuals were normal, 39% overweight, 17% obese and 6% morbidly obese. Only the morbidly obese group (BMI 35kg/m²) had a significantly higher number of visits to a GP over a 5-year period compared to the normal weight group. Read [abstract](#) in Pub Med.

14.11.11: Maternal pre-pregnant body mass index, maternal weight change and offspring birth weight. This study estimates the association between maternal pre-pregnancy BMI and maternal weight change during pregnancy and offspring birth weight using BMI classification developed by the WHO. The study includes 58,383 pregnant and found 65.2% women had normal pre-pregnancy weight, 2.9% was underweight, 22.3% were overweight, and 9.5% obese. Offspring birth weight increased with both increasing maternal pre-pregnancy BMI and maternal weight gain during pregnancy in all six categories of maternal pre-pregnancy BMI. Read [abstract](#) in Pub Med.

11.11.11: Obesity epidemics: inevitable outcome of globalization or preventable public health challenge? (Canada)

This editorial addresses the public health challenge of the established and emerging global obesity epidemics. It highlights obesity rates and associated non communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and certain cancers that have been escalating worldwide over the past four decades. Read [abstract](#) in International Journal of Public Health.

09.11.11: Women's reported weight: Is there a discrepancy? (US)

The study determined the difference between self-reported pre-pregnancy weight vs. documented pre-pregnancy weight and self-reported delivery weight vs. documented delivery weight. Self-reported pre-pregnancy weight was 2.94 kg less than documented pre-pregnancy weight. Self-reported BMI was 1.11 mg/kg (2) less than documented BMI. Self-reported Gestational weight gain (GWG) was 3.01 kg greater than documented GWG. Read [abstract](#) in the Journal of Maternal-fetal and Neonatal medicine.

03.11.11: Comparison of range of commercial or primary care led weight reduction programmes with minimal intervention control for weight loss in obesity: Lighten Up randomized controlled trial (UK). This study assessed the effectiveness of a range of weight management programs in terms of weight loss. It looked at weight loss interventions such as slimming world and weight watchers and compared the outcome to participants who received 12 vouchers for entry to a fitness club. Results show commercially provided weight management services are more effective and cheaper than primary care based services led by specially trained staff, which are ineffective. Read [full article](#) in British Medical Journal.

01.11.11: The association between maternal serious psychological distress and child obesity at 3 years: a cross-sectional analysis of the UK Millennium Cohort Data (UK).

The objective of the study was to examine the relationship between maternal serious psychological distress and obesity in early childhood. Maternal serious psychological distress was defined as a score of 13 or more on the Kessler-6 scale. Obesity was defined as body mass index \geq 95th centile of the 1990 reference chart for age and sex in children. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

01.11.11: Video Game Playing Is Independently Associated with Blood Pressure and Lipids in Overweight and Obese Adolescents (Canada)

To examine the association between duration and type of screen time (TV, video games, computer time) and blood pressure (BP) and lipids in overweight and obese adolescents. Results show seated video gaming was the only sedentary behaviour associated with elevated BP and lipids. This suggests reducing time spent playing seated video games is a possible means to promote health and prevent the incidence of cardiovascular disease risk factors in this high risk group of overweight and obese adolescents. Read [article in full](#) in Pub Med.

November 2011: Evaluation of the Living 4 Life project: a youth-led, school-based obesity prevention study (New Zealand)

The study design was quasi-experimental, with comparisons made by two cross-sectional samples within schools. Student data were collected at baseline (n = 1634) and at the end of the 3-year intervention (n = 1612) There were no significant improvements to anthropometry; this may reflect the intervention's lack of intensity and insufficient duration. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

30.10.11: GPs' attitudes, objectives and barriers in counselling for obesity—a qualitative study (Germany)

This study aimed at identifying GPs' perspectives on counselling overweight and obese patients. To that end, semi-structured interviews were conducted in Berlin with GPs regarding their objectives and barriers in overweight care. Overall, it was seen that GPs wanted to play a relatively passive role in treatment of obesity. Read [abstract](#) in European Journal of General Practice.

12.10.11: Obesity and Breast Cancer (US)

The WINS study showed that women who were randomized to a low fat dietary intervention, and who lost an average of 6 lbs as a result of participation in the intervention, experienced a lower rate of breast cancer recurrence. These trials demonstrate that weight loss is feasible after breast cancer diagnosis, and women who lose weight experience improvements in quality of life and favourable alterations in serum biomarkers that are linked to breast cancer prognosis. Read full [article](#) in the Cancer Network.

12.10.11: Weight change in a commercial web-based weight loss program and its association with website use: cohort study. The objectives of this study were to evaluate the weight change achieved of individuals enrolled in a commercial Web-based weight loss program for 12 or 52 weeks and to describe participants' program use in relation to weight change. It was found that while clinically important weight loss may be achieved, further research is required to evaluate the efficacy of this commercial Web-based weight loss program prospectively using objective measures. Read [full text](#) in Journal of Medical Internet Research.

11.10.11: Exploring Differences in Weight Perception among Blacks and Whites.

This study explored race and gender differences in underestimation of weight using BMI and waist circumference, after adjusting for other cardiovascular risk factors. The data reveal a significant misperception of weight among blacks, particularly black women, who have the highest burden of obesity. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

11.10.11: The medical care costs of obesity: An instrumental variables approach (US)

This paper is the first to use the method of instrumental variables (IV) to estimate the impact of obesity on medical costs in order to address the endogeneity of weight and to reduce the bias from reporting error in weight. This paper indicates that obesity (relative to having a BMI less than 30) is associated with \$656 higher medical expenditures for the pooled sample, \$564 higher medical expenditures for men and \$749 higher medical expenditures for women. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

October 2011: Are women in early pregnancy following national guidelines for healthy eating?

A recent study conducted with 101 women in the Coombe Women and Infants University Hospital, Dublin has found that while the majority of women thought they had a healthy diet, less than half met the recommended guidelines for each individual food group. The least compliance was found for the dairy food group, with only 5% of women consuming the recommended 5 servings a day. The study also found that almost half of the women booking for antenatal care were either overweight (32%) or obese (14%). Read full [article](#) in the Irish Medical Journal.

September 2011: Obesity estimates for children based on parent-reported versus direct measures (Canada)

This study uses data from the 2007 to 2009 Canadian Health Measures Survey. Parent-reported height and weight of children aged 6 to 11 (n=854) were obtained and subsequently, the children's height and weight were directly measured. Results show on average, parents underestimated the height (3.3 cm) and weight (1.1 kg) of their children. Read [abstract](#) in Pub Med.

August 2011: Cost-effectiveness of diet and exercise interventions to reduce overweight and obesity (Australia)

This study analyzed 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. Read [abstract](#) in International Journal of Obesity.

June 2011: Weight-Related Behavior among Adolescents: The Role of Peer Effects.

This study investigates whether social interactions in friendship networks influence the weight-related behaviors of adolescents. Results show a significant positive association between individuals' and friends' behaviors in terms of sports, exercise and fast food consumption. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

16.06.11: The effect of weight monitoring and recording on control of obesity and overweight. This quasi-experimental intervention study aimed to investigate whether recording and monitoring weight and its changes can modify eating habits and therefore weight control. Recording and monitoring weight and its changes in overweight people can affect weight control since knowledge and insight about weight may motivate people to modify their eating habits. Read abstract in [PubMed](#).

April 2011: Mothers' perception of obesity in schoolchildren: a survey and the impact of an educational intervention (Iran) The aim of this study was to investigate mothers' awareness of their children's weight, and to evaluate the impact of an educational intervention on improving mothers' recognition of obesity in their children. Obese children from twelve schools, and 300 mothers participated in the study; half of the mothers were assigned to an intervention teaching mothers about obesity whereas the other group didn't. The study found mothers involved in the intervention showed significant improvements in being able to identify obesity in their children. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

10.10.11: A pilot study to investigate the effect of plate size on meal energy intake in normal weight and overweight/obese women.

This study aimed to investigate the effect of plate size on meal energy intake in normal weight compared to overweight or obese individuals. It was found that energy intakes using the small and large plate were 1356 (515) and 1365 (393) kJ, respectively, in normal weight subjects and 1314 (632) and 1226 (431) kJ, respectively, in overweight/obese subjects. Neither plate size, nor plate size by weight status significantly affected meal energy intake. Read [abstract](#) in Wiley.

08.04.11: How to lose weight bias fast! Evaluating a brief anti-weight bias intervention. The objective of this study was to evaluate a brief educational intervention that aimed to reduce weight bias among Australian pre-service health students by challenging beliefs about the controllability of weight. This study provides evidence that brief, education-based anti-weight bias interventions show success in challenging weight controllability beliefs and reducing weight bias among pre-service health students. Read [abstract](#) online in Wiley.

22.03.11: Does perception equal reality? Weight misperception in relation to weight-related attitudes and behaviours among overweight and obese US adults. This study examined associations between weight misperception and several weight-related attitudes and behaviours among a nationally representative sample of overweight and obese US adults. These overweight/obese men and women who misperceived their weight were 71% and 65% less likely to report that they want to lose weight and 60% and 56% less likely to have tried to lose weight within the past year, respectively, compared to those who accurately perceived themselves as overweight. Read [full article](#) in the International Journal of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity.

[Nutrition News](#)

23.11.11: Food consumption habits in two states of Australia, as measured by a Food Frequency Questionnaire (Australia).

This pilot study used a routine telephone risk factor surveillance survey to recruit participants in South Australia (SA) and Western Australia (WA) to a postal survey investigating food consumption habits, using a FFQ. Respondents were also about their fruit and vegetable consumption, height and weight so that comparisons could be made between the data. The results of the FFQ were very similar for WA and SA. Less than 10% of respondents met the daily guidelines for vegetable consumption. Over half of respondents were overweight or obese. Read [abstract](#) in BioMed Central.

01.11.11: Cost-free and sustainable incentive increases healthy eating decisions during elementary school lunch (US). This intervention aimed to develop a cost-free and sustainable program to influence healthier eating decisions during elementary school lunch. It was identified labelled items on the lunch menu represented the healthiest choice, students were allowed to ring a call bell in the cafeteria for public recognition when they chose all of the identified healthiest food and beverage items during lunch service. Healthiest food & beverage choices increased 49% with >60% of students choosing non-flavoured milk over flavoured milk during the intervention phase. Read [abstract](#) in the International Journal of Obesity.

19.10.11: The effect of fast-food availability on fast-food consumption and obesity among rural residents: An analysis by race/ethnicity (US)

This paper analyses the effect of fast-food availability on the level of fast-food consumption and obesity risk among both white and non-white residents of central Texas. It was identified that non-whites tend to exhibit higher obesity rates, greater access to fast-food establishments and higher consumption of fast-food meals compared to their white counterparts. In addition it was found that whites and non-whites respond differently to the availability of fast-food in rural environments. Read [abstract](#) in Science Direct.

12.10.11: Infant diet and subcutaneous fat mass in early childhood: The Generation R Study.

The objective of this study was to assess whether the duration and exclusiveness of breastfeeding and the timing of introduction of solid foods are associated with the subcutaneous fat mass in early childhood. The results suggest that a shorter duration and non-exclusive breastfeeding affect early body composition during the first 2 years of life. Read [full text](#) in Nutroscienca.

19.09.11: Beverage consumption and BMI of British schoolchildren aged 9–13 years (UK)

This study examined the beverage intake and BMI of a group of 9–13 year-olds from south-west London, UK. Boys were found to obtain more of their energy from beverages and were consuming greater amounts of sugar and drinking more soft drinks than girls. Boys consumed 10% and girls consumed 9% of their daily energy intake Read [abstract](#) in Pub Med.

Physical Activity

10.11.11: Brisk walking reduces ad libitum snacking in regular chocolate eaters during a workplace simulation (UK).

This study investigated the effect of brief exercise on ad libitum consumption during breaks in a computerised task. Seventy-eight regular chocolate eaters, age: 24.90±8.15years, BMI: 23.56±3.78kg/m(2) abstained for 2days. They were randomly assigned to one of four conditions, Results showed a decreased intake of chocolate for the exercise (15.6g) than control (28.8g) group. Read [abstract](#) in Pub Med.

02.11.11: Improving fitness and reducing obesity in preschool children (Switzerland). This study which targeted teachers, children, and parents over one school year, focused on physical activity, nutrition, media use, and sleep duration. The cluster randomised controlled trial, which investigated 725 children, showed a significant

improvement in fitness (per cent improvement not stated) and a 32% reduction in the number of overweight children. Read [abstract](#) in the British Medical Journal.

14.10.11: Physical activity, sedentary behaviour, and childhood obesity: A review of cross-sectional studies. This systematic review examined the associations of physical activity (PA) and sedentary behaviour to childhood overweight and obesity in cross-sectional studies from the last 10 years. PA was related negatively to child weight status in some studies; however, it was not associated in others. In general, sedentary behaviours were positively associated with weight status. However, gender differences appeared in some studies for each variable. Read [abstract](#) in Taylor and Francis Online.

13.10.11: Time trends in leisure time physical activity and physical fitness in elderly people: 20 year follow-up of the Spanish population national health survey (1987-2006). This study was conducted to estimate trends in leisure time physical activity and physical fitness between 1987-2006 in older Spanish people. It found an increase in leisure time physical activity in the older Spanish population. Older age, married status, co-morbid conditions, obesity, and worse self-perceived health status were associated with lower activity. Identification of these factors can help to identify individuals at risk for physical inactivity. Read [full text](#) in BioMed Central.

13.09.11: Built environment, physical activity, and obesity: What have we learned from reviewing the literature?

The aims of this review were to evaluate the quality and key characteristics of the reviews, and to set the agenda for future research through identifying research gaps and areas of improvement. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

September 2011: Breakfast frequency inversely associated with BMI and body fatness in Hong Kong Chinese children aged 9-18 years. (Hong Kong)

Researchers assessed the relationship between breakfast frequency and measures of obesity in Hong Kong Chinese children aged 9-18 years. A total of 11,570 children (50% boys) underwent anthropometric measurements and completed a simple self-administered dietary behaviour questionnaire. Results showed 12% of Hong Kong children aged 9-18 years who skipped breakfast had higher BMI, BMI z-scores and percentage of body fat than their non- breakfast skippers. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

[Resources/Publications](#)

09.11.11: Growing up in Ireland: Overweight and Obesity among 9 Year Olds

The National Longitudinal Study of Children published a major new report from the study on overweight and obesity among children in Ireland. Key findings include: 26% of nine-year-old children were found to have a body mass index (BMI) that was outside of the 'healthy' range. Of these, 19% were defined as overweight and 7% obese. Girls were significantly more likely to be overweight (22% v 19%) or obese (8% v 5%) than boys. Further information about the study is available on the [Growing up in Ireland website](#).

01.12.11: Growing up in Ireland: The Infant Cohort at 3 Years

Growing Up in Ireland: the National Longitudinal Study of Children launched the latest findings from the Infant Cohort at 3 Years. The findings show that three-year-olds in Ireland are in good health with a few notable public health and related issues (including overweight and obesity) with one in four or almost one quarter of three-year-old children

being overweight (19%) or obese (6%). Read latest findings on the [Growing up in Ireland website](#).

17.11.11: Northern Ireland Sport and Physical Activity Survey (SAPAS) 2010

A report was launched by Sport Northern Ireland providing a complete picture of adult participation in sport and physical activity across Northern Ireland. The report found that most adults in Northern Ireland are not active enough to maintain general health. Only 35% of Northern Ireland's adults achieve the required 30 minutes activity on at least five days per week. Read full report on the [Sport NI website](#).

15.11.11: Health survey Northern Ireland, results from 2010/2011 survey (NI)

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) have presented the first results from the 2010/11 Health Survey NI. The survey provides information on a range of health related matters such as general health, mental health, physical activity, diet and nutrition and obesity. The results show that 59% of adults were either overweight (36%) or obese (23%). Read more about the survey on the [DHSSPS website](#).

23.11.11: Diet, Physical Activity and Cardiovascular Disease Prevention in Europe (EU)

This report launched by The European Heart Network (EHN) is the result of two years of collaborative research involving a large number of European universities and experts. It reviews the latest evidence on the relationship between cardiovascular health and what we eat or how active we are. It also takes a close look at current European eating and physical activity patterns and proposes a series of policy actions. Read more about the report on the [European Heart Network](#).

Forthcoming Events

Sport for LIFE Celebration and Legacy Project Launch which will take place on Wednesday 14 December 2011 at 10.00am in the Assembly Hall, Jordanstown campus. The Sport for LIFE programme, launched in January 2010 was a 2 year physical activity and health intervention for year 5 primary school pupils from areas of greatest disadvantage in Northern Ireland. Following this success the legacy programme will focus on offering a dedicated education and support programme to pre service teachers from teacher training colleges within Northern Ireland.

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

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