

The Childhood Obesity Pandemic: Progress, Best Practices and Frameworks for Further Action

A Public Policy Exchange Symposium



Thursday 18th October 2012

The Silken Berlaymont Hotel
Brussels

"An International Symposium for gathering knowledge, discussing the latest challenges and sharing best practices in tackling obesity and developing effective health promotion strategies in Europe"

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Overview

Childhood obesity is one of Europe's most pressing public health challenges and according to the European Commission, some 22 million children in the EU are considered overweight or obese, with the number growing by 400,000 per year. Chronically overweight individuals face a number of serious health, social and psychological challenges as their quality of life becomes adversely affected. Obesity increases the risk of serious illness, including heart disease, diabetes, hypertension and strokes.

Until now, most approaches have focused on changing the behaviour of individuals in diet and exercise. It seems however that these strategies have had little impact in terms of reversing obesity levels. Whilst the latest OECD update confirms that the progression of the epidemic has effectively come to a halt for the past ten years in many countries, there is however no sign of retrenchment. Rates of obesity, including notably childhood obesity, remain high despite major policy efforts. The general consensus amongst researchers seems to be that prevention could be the key strategy for tackling the problem. Whilst maintaining that obesity is a complex and multifaceted problem which therefore requires a comprehensive approach, prevention, achieved through a variety of strategies focused in particular on children and, even earlier, on pregnant women, seems to be the most effective intervention.

The EU has an essential role in dealing with these challenges through its food safety, public health, education and research policies. Whilst officials have recognised the threat by promoting healthy eating campaigns and specialised events, these measures alone are not effective enough. Communities and governments need to act to curb the epidemic and more can be done to raise awareness, especially by improving health education in schools.

This timely international symposium aims at reigniting the debate about an EU-wide strategy to tackle the issue of childhood obesity, by evaluating current frameworks for action, the latest institutional developments and reviewing the most relevant evidence-based interventions to promote healthy diets and physical activity aimed at preventing obesity. The symposium will provide a platform for the discussion of a better European regulatory framework, support the exchange of ideas and encourage delegates to engage in thought-provoking topical debate whilst sharing best practices and lessons learnt.

“ The European Parliament: [...] underlines that children and young people, who increasingly suffer the consequences of sedentariness and obesity, are more sensitive to advertising for food with high fat, salt and sugar content; welcomes self-regulatory initiatives and codes of conducts launched by businesses to limit children and young people's exposure to food advertising (such as the ones launched in the framework of the Commission's Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health), and calls on all stakeholders to effectively educate and inform children and young people and their caregivers about the importance of balanced nutrition and an active, healthy lifestyle; in this regard, calls for an in-depth analysis by the Commission into whether stricter rules are needed regarding advertising aimed at children and young people; urges the Commission to include the protection of children among the main priorities of the Consumer Agenda, with particular focus on aggressive or misleading TV and online advertising.”

- OECD- Obesity Update 2012

Venue and Accommodation

**The Silken Berlaymont Hotel,
11-19, Boulevard Charlemagne
1000 Brussels - Belgium**

Through our partnership with the Silken Berlaymont Hotel we are pleased to be able to offer our delegates specially negotiated accommodation rates. These discounted room rates are subject to availability and are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.



Why Attend?

- ✓ **Examine the progress, challenges and next steps in tackling the 'childhood obesity pandemic' and explore ways in which to encourage healthy lifestyle habits in every child**
- ✓ **Highlight the crucial importance of pre-conceptual years for effective obesity prevention and intervention at an early stage of life**
- ✓ **Discuss the need for a continent-wide framework for breaking the cycle of obesity in Europe**
- ✓ **Identify lessons learned from European obesity prevention initiatives and hear recommendations for future EU policy actions**

Who Should Attend?

- Public Health Practitioners
- Health Promotion Practitioners
- Child Health Visitors
- Family Nurse Partnerships
- General Practitioners
- Local Authority Officers and Councillors
- Central Government Departments and Agencies
- Heads of Children's Services and Teams
- Pre-School, Infant School, Primary and Secondary School Head Teachers and Staff
- School Nurses
- Health Service Professionals
- Youth Services
- Leisure Services
- Food and Drinks Industry Professionals
- Midwives
- Maternity Care and Midwifery Organisations
- Maternity Support Workers
- NHS Training Departments
- Parent Participation Teams
- Parental Engagement Teams
- Paediatricians
- Teenage Pregnancy Coordinators and Advisors
- Local Pregnancy Advisory Services
- Heads of Early Years
- Play Groups
- Social Workers and Social Services Officers
- Family Planning Clinics
- Integrated Disabled Services
- Local Education Authorities
- Safeguarding Children Teams and Local Safeguarding Boards
- Voluntary and Community Organisations
- Third Sector Practitioners and Organisations
- Trade Unions

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Programme

- 09:15** Registration and Morning Refreshments
- 10:00** Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks
Tam Fry, Honorary Chairman, Child Growth Foundation, National Obesity Forum, UK (confirmed)
- 10:10** **Prevention and Early Intervention – Tackling Adult Obesity from an Early Age**
- Food and Nutrition Policies in Europe - A Comparative Analysis
 - Risk Factors in Pregnancy, Birth Weight and Child Growth
 - Childhood Obesity Trends and the Advantages of Prevention
 - Determining Eating Behaviours - The Individual, the Family, the Environment
 - Recommendations for Further Action
- 10:40** **First Round of Discussions**
- 11:10** Morning Coffee Break
- 11:30** **An EU-Wide Framework for Action – Understanding the European Perspective**
- Impact of the European Commission's Strategy on Childhood Obesity
 - Protecting Obese Children and Pregnant Women as Vulnerable Consumers
 - Future Actions Needed to Tackle Obesity at the EU-Level
- 12:00** **Second Round of Discussions**
- 12:30** Networking Lunch
- 13.30** **Practical Solutions – Pan-European Evidence-Based Interventions**
- The Toy-box Project – The Case for Preschool-Based, Family-Involved Intervention to Influence Obesity-Related Behaviour
 - The Epode European Network: Learning from Past Experiences
 - Stakeholders Involvement and Impact Assessment
 - Implementation and Outcomes of the Projects
 - Recommendations for European Public Health Policy
- 13.55** **Third Round of Discussions**
- 14:25** Afternoon Coffee Break
- 14:40** **Striking the Balance between Consumers' Interests and Producers' Needs**
- Potential Risks and Opportunities of a Food Industry-Institution Partnership
 - Labelling and Taxing of Unhealthy Foods and the Importance of Individual Responsibility
 - Marketing Guidelines for Food Products Aimed at Children
 - Recommendations for a Private-Public Interaction Framework to Tackle Childhood Obesity
- 15:05** **Fourth Round of Discussions**
- 15:35** Chairman's Summary and Closing Comments
- 15:40** Networking Reception
- 16:40** Close

Sponsorship and Exhibition Opportunities

We offer a range of opportunities to enable your organisation to raise its profile and communicate with key decision makers in the public sector.

For further information please contact:

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or email parvin.madahar@publicpolicyexchange.co.uk

Event Details

Date: Thursday 18th October 2012

Time: 10:00am – 4:40pm

Venue: The Silken Berlaymont Hotel, Brussels



Speakers include

- ✓ **Despina Spanou**, Principal Advisor, DG SANCO; Chair, EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health and the High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity (tbc)
- ✓ **Dr Joao Breda**, Programme Manager, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity WHO Regional Office for Europe (confirmed)
- ✓ **Jean-Michel Borys**, MD, Director of the EEN Endocrinologist, Director Fleurbaix Laventie Ville Santé, Epode European Network (confirmed)
- ✓ **Corinna Hawkes**, Food and Nutrition Policy Analyst, City University of London (confirmed)

“**The obesity epidemic slowed down in several OECD countries during the past three years. Rates grew less than previously projected, or did not grow at all, according to new data from ten OECD countries. [...] However, rates remain high and social disparities in obesity are unabated. [...] For child obesity as well as adult obesity, there is no clear sign of retrenchment of the epidemic, despite major policy efforts focused on children in some of the countries concerned.**”

- European Agency for Health and Safety at Work, 2011