OBESITY

Public Health Policy

BMHP5013

(Group 4)

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Introduction:

- Presentation will focus on obesity in the United Kingdom (UK)
- Include children and adults.
- Definitions and background
- Identify incidence, prevalence and trends at national and global levels.
- Possible causes of obesity.
- Focus on Public health policies in the UK.
- Identify the roles of local , national and international agencies in tackling obesity
- Conclusion and recommendations.

Definitions and background:

- Obesity is when a person is very overweight with a lot of body fat (National Health Services NHS, 2020).
- Obesity is an abnormal and excess fat accumulation in the body and risk to health (World Health Organization WHO, 2020).
- Body Mass Index (BMI) tool is used as a measure of weight (kg) to height (m2) of the individual (NHS 2020).
- BMI result greater than 30 is a measure for obesity in adults.
- BMI result for age-category greater than 95th percentile is a measure for obesity in children (male, female).
- Waist size greater than 95cm for men and greater than 80cm for women is a measure of excess fat (NHS,2020).
- Obesity is a preventable disease.
- Increasing association with poorer mental health outcomes and reduced life expectancy.
- Obese and overweight children are more likely to be obese adults (NHS, 2020)
- Obesity linked with serious diseases such as stroke, heart disease, diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure (NHS,2020)

Obesity statistics

- The rates of obesity have similarly increased in the united kingdom since the 1980s , this rise is projected to continue (NHS , 2020).
- The age group most likely to be overweight or obese is age 65 –74 . (NHS.2020)
- Since 1991 the prevalence of obesity has increase by 65% in men , and 25% in woman (IJSO , 2017).
- Estimates that 67% males and 60% females will be obese by 2050.
- 1 in 5 children are obese in the UK (20% of children population).
- National Health Services (NHS) spends over £6 billion yearly on obesity and associated diseases (PHE, 2020).
- Obese Children often become obese adults (NHS,2020).
- 38 million children under 5 years were overweight or obese in 2019 (WHO)
- 650 million adults out of 1.9 billion adults were obese in 2016 globally (WHO)tf
- Common among Black, Asian and ethnic minority groups.
- Worldwide obesity has nearly tripled since 1975 (WHO , 2020).
- 4% in 1975 to 18% in 2016 for 5-19 years old with obesity globally.
- Higher morbidity and mortality rates.

Causes of obesity

- **Age, Sex and Hereditary Factors and Medication/Medical conditions:** Menopause in women who are between the ages of 45-55, underlying health conditions, under active thyroid glands, (NHS 2020). Medication for Diabetes, Epilepsy and Schizophrenia, (Health Express 2020).

- **Individual Lifestyle Factors**: Poor diet which has high amounts of sugar, fat and salt content, consuming high amounts of calories (energy) and lack of physical activity, excessive alcohol consumption, (NHS 2020).

- **Social and Community Networks:** Friends and family, deprived communities, access to healthy foods and exposure to advertising and sale of unhealthy foods.

- **Living and working conditions:** Access to space, work environment, sedentary jobs, long working hours, multiple jobs.

- **General socio-economic, Cultural and Environmental conditions:** Cultural beliefs, availability of work, minimum wages and disposable income.

UK policies on obesity:

-**SUGAR TAX OR Soft Drink Industry Levy (2018)**

- Levy on manufacturers of soft drinks.
- 24p per litre of drink with 8 grams sugar/100ml (HM Treasury, 2018).
- 18p per litre of drink with 5-8 grams sugar/100ml (HM Treasury, 2018).
- Aim is to reduce sugar content (soft drink and food products) by at least 20%, lower portion size and shift towards lower sugar alternatives.
- Revenue from levy invested to promote balanced and healthy diet for children in schools.
- Revenue from levy invested in physical activity programmes and upgrade facilities in schools (primary sports premium).
- Legislation in process to ban sale of energy drinks to children specifically adolescents (contains more sugar and cheaper alternative than soft drinks). (BBC, 2018)

-**Healthy Sure Start Scheme (2015)**

- Giving low -income families food and drink vouchers.
- vouchers in exchange for fresh fruits, vegetables and milk for children and their families (Gov.uk, 2015)
- Free vitamin supplements to pregnant women to support healthy unborn children. (NHS, 2019)
- Aim is to ensure early start to healthy and balanced diet.
- **The School food standard** introduced to ensure nutritious and healthy food is given to pupils in school. (British Nutrition Foundation, 2015)
- Set the legal requirements for all food and drink provided in schools.

UK policies on obesity:

RESTRICTIONS AND BANS

- Restriction of advertisements on Food and drinks High in saturated Fat, Salt and Sugar (HFSS) products.
- Restrictions of HFSS food and drinks advertisement on Television until 9pm.
- Ban the promotion of unhealthy food and drinks by location including at checkouts and store entrances. (The Guardian, 2020)
- Ban price promotions of unhealthy food and drinks for example Buy One Get One Free (BOGOF) and other multi buy offers.

LOCAL AUTHORITY POWERS

- Local authority powers are used to promote healthy local environment.
- Limit the number of fast-food shops and outlets on high street and local communities (granting licenses).
- Limit the opening of fast-food shops and outlets close to schools and densely populated areas.
- Deliver walking and cycling infrastructures in green spaces and parks to promote physical activities.
- Grant licenses to open more fitness and leisure centers to promote physical activities.

UK policies on obesity:

Physical activity programs

- **PE and sport premium** set up to encourage physical activities in schools linked to revenue from sugar tax.
- **School Sport and Activity Action plan** ensures that Children and young people access 60 minutes physical activities daily.
- 30 minutes of physical activities in school.
- 30 minutes physical activities and play supported by parents and care givers at home for example, playgrounds and physical activity facilities in parks.
- After school clubs offer extracurricular activities to children outside school settings.
- **Active Mile Initiative** established to improve pupil fitness by implementing active mile into the school day for all pupils .
- **Healthy Schools Rating Scheme f**or self-evaluating and promoting healthy eating and physical activity during the school day.
- **Walk to school project** encourage students to walk to school for example, daily mile
- **National cycling training programs** support children to cycle safely on roads

Call to Action Campaign (2011)

- Ambitious plan of government to bring down the trend of obesity by 2020.
- Target overweight and obese children and adults in communities as healthy lives mean healthy people.
- Take steps towards healthier weight for all by partnership with local, business, charities, health professionals and individuals.
- Provide data, evidence and funds to promote actions in reducing obesity
- People get free access and the right information to losing and maintaining healthy weight.

UK policies on obesity:

WEIGHT LOSS PLAN (2019)

- Designed to lose weight at safe rate of 0.5-1 kg/week (NHS,2020).
- It is suitable for adults whose BMI is over 25 and your own personal weight loss target
- Made up of 12-week diet and exercise plan to lose weight safely.
- It helps to record your physical activities and progress and provide the skills needed to prevent weight regain.
- The plan encourages individuals to join local weight loss groups and Podcasts for example Couch to 5K, Strength and Flex.
- Free NHS weight loss guide accessibjle online as an App.

CALORIE REDUCTION SCHEME AND TRAFFIC LIGHT SYSTEM

- Require food and drink industry to reduce the calorie portions in food by 20%.(GOV.UK, 2018).
- Calorie labelling is part of product packaging.
- Provide information to make healthier choices on food and drinks.
- Introduced traffic light system to indicate high, medium or low levels of salt, fat and sugar
- It uses color coding of red, amber and green
- The traffic system help make informed decision on drinks and food to be consumed.

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Role of agencies

Local level: Local Government Authority

- Provide support and information services to obese and overweight individuals resident in the local authority for example local council.
- Ensure that all schools within their local authority are complying with the guidance of healthier eating and physical activities.
- Provide information, evidence and support in developing policies and guidelines in tackling and preventing obesity. National: PHE, health boards and the government.
- To reduce weight stigma and discrimination.

National level: Public Health England

- Providing awareness and understanding.
- Observe, record and monitor the occurrence, prevalence and trends of obesity in the country specifically England.
- Managing obesity and overweight children.
- Public Health England role is to educate people about obesity and being overweight and what the risk factors are.
- What issues and diseases being overweight can lead too.
- Helping local businesses offer healthier foods.
- Using policies to tackle obesity. (PHE, 2020)

International level: World Health Organization

- The EU and WHO fund extensive research on food nutrition and explore options for the prevention and management of obesity across all nations.
- Provides leadership, foster networks and partnership collaboration with private, public and government institutions across the globe.
- International agencies for example EU and World Health Organization.
- Prioritize education of obesity and being overweight.
- Work with governments to promote healthy living. (WHO, 2021)

Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusion:

- Obesity in both children and adults has become one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century and various government across the globe have continued to take steps towards tackling obesity including the UK.
- Programmes and policies engaged with healthier food and drinks and more physical activities remains the ways in which obesity can be prevented, controlled and managed.
- It requires the collaboration of all stakeholders including individual, government, private organisations , charities and international organisations like WHO.
- Eventually leads to a healthy people and a healthy world but more still needs to be done.

Recommendations

- Review of existing obesity legislations for improvement where necessary for example, possibly raising the soft drink industry levy.
- More physical activity infrastructures built to encourage active participation in reducing weight and becoming more active eg. bicycle lanes on our streets and roads, gym equipment in our local parks for children and adults.
- Introduce reward and award system for children in schools who were able to reduce their weight and obesity through activity and fruit/vegetables to motivate other children.
- Government needs to do more in deprived communities to reduce the social, income and health inequalities since obesity and overweight is common in those areas eg more awareness campaigns on healthy eating and keeping fit, providing more job opportunities for locals.
- New Collaboration with regional and international organisations on better policy options to tackle obesity. BREXIT does not mean exit from collaboration and partnership.
- More organisations should take up funding gym membership subscriptions for their employees to encourage active lifestyles.

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