Tackling Childhood Obesity in Europe: Comparative Perspectives on Prevention and Policy Implementation

Tuesday 3rd April 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"
Overview

With children in Europe getting heavier and less active, Governments across the EU have declared childhood obesity as one of Europe’s most pressing public health challenges. Chronically overweight individuals face a number of serious health, social and psychological challenges with their quality of life being adversely affected. Obesity increases the risk of a person developing serious illnesses, including heart disease, diabetes, hypertension and strokes. According to a study conducted in Sweden (2011), pregnant women who are obese expose their children to a higher risk of developing obesity-related diseases such as asthma. The risk, therefore, of obesity-related diseases in children can be reduced by examining mothers’ behaviour around a child’s birth.

According to the European Commission, some 22 million children in the EU are considered overweight or obese, with the numbers growing by 400,000 per year. A report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) showed that 13.3% of EU children aged 11-15 are overweight or obese, with numbers rising for boys in all countries, while declining slightly for girls in Ireland and Britain.

The EU has a pivotal role to play 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 alike need to act to curb the epidemic. More can be done to raise awareness, especially by improving health education in schools.

To identify the underlying social causes of obesity and their common risk factors, WHO/Europe commissioned a review of the social determinants of health throughout all 53 Member States, due to be completed this year. This review will provide scientific evidence and a framework for future action to help develop a new health policy for the Region. Furthermore, WHO/Europe supports activities at country and international level to implement the WHO European Action Plan for Food and Nutrition Policy 2007-2012. For this purpose, action networks have been set up consisting of groups of Member States that have taken the lead in addressing particular challenges, such as reducing salt intake and reducing marketing pressure on children.

This timely international symposium offers an invaluable opportunity to consider the progress made in tackling childhood obesity. There is an urgent need for coordinated partnerships involving different government sectors, communities, marketing/mass media and the private sector to ensure that diet and everyday levels of physical activity can be changed effectively and sustainably.

Public Policy Exchange welcomes the participation of all partners, responsible authorities and stakeholders. The symposium will support the exchange of ideas and encourage delegates to engage in thought-provoking topical debate.

“\n\nA healthy diet during childhood and adolescence is known to reduce the risks of both immediate nutrition-related health problems (obesity and dental caries) and non-communicable diseases in later life (cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer). Schools offer an opportunity to promote a healthy diet and establish dietary habits to be carried through life and channelled into the wider community”

- Healthy Nutrition in Schools, World Health Organisation, 23rd September 2011

Why Attend?

✓ Explore the progress, challenges and next steps in curbing the rise of obesity in children and ways in which to encourage healthy lifestyle habits in every child
✓ Explore ways of embedding effective and sustainable interventions in health, education and care systems to influence current environment and cultural practices within schools
✓ Support healthy eating and physical activity strategies along with their possible inclusion in political decisions and initiatives in Europe
✓ Identify measurable data on childhood obesity and utilise it in relevant cross-border projects
✓ Discuss how to provide healthier options and protect children from unhealthy food advertising

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
- Dietitians
- 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
- Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Practitioners
- Academics and Researchers
- Research Councils
- Campaigning Organisations
- International Organisations
- Academics

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.

Enquiries: +44 (0) 845 606 1535 www.publicpolicyexchange.co.uk
Tackling Childhood Obesity in Europe: Comparative Perspectives on Prevention and Policy Implementation

Programme

09:30 Registration and Morning Refreshments

10:00 Chair’s Welcome and Opening Remarks
Dr Tim Lobstein, Director of Policy and Programmes, The International Association for the Study of Obesity (confirmed)

10:10 Levelling Off in the Prevalence of Obesity in Europe – A Real Shift?
• General Trends in Europe – Analysing Comparative Experience
• Socioeconomic Factors
• Driving Forces for Child Obesity Epidemic in Europe
• Analysing and Collecting Child Obesity Data – Challenges and Possible Solutions
• Conclusions and Recommendations

11:00 First Round of Discussions

11:30 Morning Coffee Break

11:50 Monitoring School and Community Action on Obesity: Practical Indicators
• Raising Awareness of Childhood Obesity in Schools
• Empowering Children and Young People to Make Informed Choices
• Best Practices
• Recommendations for Future Policy Actions

12:05 Second Round of Discussions

12:35 Networking Lunch

13:35 Holistic and Independent Approaches towards Nutrition and Health Promotion in Europe
• Providing Safe Physical Activity from the Earliest Stage
• Preventing Obesity in Schools
• Identification and Promotion of Good Practices and Education Campaigns
• Cross-cutting Community Initiatives and Partnerships
• Recommendations

13:50 Third Round of Discussions

14:20 Afternoon Coffee Break

14:35 Barriers and Opportunities to Obesity Policy at European level
• Cooperation with EU Member States
• Practical Intervention Programs – Lessons Learned
• Creating Evidence-based Strategies for Policy Development
• Community-based Interventions: Cost-Effective Approaches and Training Personal in Social and Healthcare Services
• Recommendations

15:30 Fourth Round of Discussions

16:00 Chairman’s Summary and Closing Comments

16:10 Networking Refreshments

16:45 Close

Event Details

Date: Tuesday 3rd April 2012
Time: 10:00am – 4:45pm
Venue: The Silken Berlaymont Hotel, Brussels

Speakers include
✓ Dr Jennifer Baker, Senior Research Associate, Institute of Preventive Medicine, Copenhagen University Hospital, Denmark (confirmed)
✓ Dr. Juan Ballesteros, Vocal Asesor Estrategia NAOS, Spanish Agency for Food Safety and Nutrition (confirmed)
✓ Mr. Mogens Kirkeby, President, International Sports and Culture Association, Denmark (confirmed)
✓ Ms. Caroline Bollars, Technical Officer – Nutrition Policy, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Programme, World Health Organisation (confirmed)

“...The main goal is to stabilize or slow down weight gain while ensuring normal growth and development. During the growth period, a child usually gains about 3kg per year. In the case of an overweight child, the objective is not to lose weight, but to let him/her grow tall while maintaining the same weight. In this way, the child will not lose weight, but will “thin out.” The first step is to determine the most probable causes of excess weight in your child, and then to work on changing identified behaviours and habits. The whole family is involved. Parents play a determining role in the behaviour of their children, as well as the environment in the home. They are models and serve as important examples for their children”


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:
Parvin Madahar on +44 (0) 20 3137 8630
or email parvin.madahar@publicpolicyexchange.co.uk