

CHILDHOOD OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY INTERVENTIONS IN ASIA: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Effective interventions are undeniably required to halt and reverse the rising trend in the number of overweight and obese children, globally and in Asia. A research gap existed on “what has been done so far?” and “what worked best?” on this issue in Asia. This dissertation, thus, aimed to identify the childhood overweight and obesity related intervention approaches implemented in Asian countries, assess their effectiveness and identify the socio-ecological context targeted by those interventions. A non-systematic review of literature was conducted between April 2014 and June 2014. Altogether eleven studies from China, Thailand, India, Iran and Pakistan were reviewed. Findings revealed that intervention approaches incorporated by these studies were nutrition education (n=4), physical activity (n=4), physical activity with dietary behaviour modification (n=1), physical activity with nutrition education (n=1). One study incorporated more than two approaches (n=1). Interventions were mainly conducted in school-based settings. Owing to limited number of studies, concrete data on effectiveness of interventions was not extracted. However, combined approaches, large-scale interventions, and interventions based on theoretical frameworks yielded significant results. Single component interventions showed mixed results. The sociological contexts of the interventions were confined to individual, school and family, the structures within the micro- and meso-systems of the Socio-ecological model (SEM). The studies in the review were relatively new which indicates that this issue is being prioritised in Asia, even if steadily. Still, there's a need of furthermore new and innovative intervention studies. Future research on this topic should involve other structures of SEM, incorporate large-scale multi-component approaches, target younger age groups (<4 years) as well as adolescents.