

## **Dietary management of obesity in adults: pitfalls & opportunities in Europe. Dietetic management status & future steps.**

The European region is currently leading the world statistics for non-communicable disease (NCD) prevalence according to the World Health Organisation. Despite strong recommendations to reduce obesity, smoking, alcohol and to encourage dietary changes there are no concrete targets agreed among the different countries in the region. Currently a small number of countries (n=7) have national guidelines for the management of obesity and only four of them are specifically targeted to dietitians. Existing guidelines and the literature agree that a target of 5-15% weight reduction over 6 months achieved by a moderate energy deficit of approximately 500kcal daily is a realistic target (strong evidence). The aim is to engage individuals in weight loss lifestyle programs (diet and exercise) of a minimum 6 month duration followed by 1-year long weight maintenance. Such hypocaloric diets should be prescribed by nutrition professionals who will establish at least monthly contact and will employ a range of tools such as behavioral change and should be tailored to the individual's likings and cultural preferences to increase adherence. Even modest weight changes could be linked to clinically significant outcomes in obesity-related markers of NCD risk.

At this stage there is more research needed to conclude on the effectiveness of very low calorie diets and dietary interventions focused on energy density, portion size, timing of meals, as well as the reduction of sugar intake and glycaemic index on obesity management. Despite an agreed need for personalised approaches in obesity treatment there is an opportunity for a common approach in the dietetic treatment of obesity across Europe that will act as a platform for harmonised clinical practise and future research.