

## Invited Speaker Abstract

### Author

van Schaik, Rian  
Dietetic Manager  
Sint Lucas hospital  
8310 Brugge  
Belgium  
President of The Flemish Dietetic Association Belgium (VBVD)

### Co-Authors

Lejeune, H el ene  
Registered Dietitian  
President of The French Speaking Dietetic Association Belgium ((UPDLF)

### Title

Lobbying for reimbursement of dietetic treatment of overweight and obese children and adolescents in Belgium

#### 1. Abstract

Obesity is an increasing problem, but dietetic care by dietitians is currently not reimbursed in Belgium. In 2014 46% of adults in Belgium was overweight including 20% obesity. In Flemish Belgium overweight, including obesity, in 15 year old boys increased from 11% to 15% and in 15 year old girls from 8% to 11% between 2005 and 2014 and obesity in children rose from 3 to 5%.

In May 2018 politicians organized a hearing at the Chamber of Representation about a broad approach of obesity in Belgium with special attention for children and adolescents. The Flemish Dietetic Association (VBVD) was invited to present their view on this subject. We advised on how dietitians can most effectively contribute to tackling obesity and overweight within the budget. We recommended starting with reimbursement of dietary advice for children (and their parents) and adolescents as the health risk of children remaining overweight or obese in adulthood and the burden of related cost is enormous.

In November 2018 a 5 million euro yearly budget for dietetic treatment of obese children and adolescents was announced by the Federal Minister of Health. In 2019 the Presidents of the two national dietetic associations (the VBVD and the French speaking UPDLF) were invited to discuss the best possible application of the available budget. We negotiated a package of reimbursement of 5 hours of dietetic care by dietitians over 2 years for overweight and obese children from 6 to 17 years of age. We further requested reimbursement of dietetic care within ambulatory interdisciplinary care teams for overweight and obese children with comorbidity in hospitals, in addition to the already existing residential care for very obese children.

Here we will present some key elements for successful lobbying and negotiation with the government as experts in dietary care.

#### 2. key messages

Successful lobbying with politicians depends on a clear message send at the right time and the right moment eg after press information about subjects related to the message.

Successful negotiation by the President of the dietetic associations with the government is possible if the organization is recognized by the government.

Successful negotiation should be done by experienced dietitians who are familiar with the subject and who are well prepared and provide EB Best practice documents