

Invited Speaker Abstract

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Title

Applications of behavioural science to child obesity

1. Abstract

Behaviour is critical to the development, maintenance and treatment of child obesity. The Behavioural Susceptibility model of obesity suggests that genes and the environment interact in complex ways to generate excessive weight gain in children, and that modifications to the food environment have an important role to play in supporting parents and children to regulate energy intake to prevent or reduce excessive weight gain. Approaches to environmental modification based on the concept of 'nudge' are one of a range of approaches that draw upon behavioural science. This paper outlines how nudge-based approaches fit within the broader framework of behavioural science, and how they can be integrated with other approaches to shape children's eating behavior in ways that lead to healthy regulation of energy intake.

2. Key references

Chadwick PM, Crawford C. & Ly L. (2013). Human food choice and nutritional interventions. *Nutrition Bulletin*, 38 (1), 36-42
Michie, S., Atkins, L., West, R. (2013). *The Behaviour Change Wheel: A Guide to Developing Interventions*. Silverback Publishing.

3. Key messages

1. Behavioural factors are critical to the development and maintenance of excessive weight gain in childhood, and are driven by genetic and environmental influences.
2. Nudge-based interventions can be effective at modifying the environment in which eating behavior is expressed and have a role to play at optimizing the food environment to make energy regulation easier.
3. Effective reversal of the child obesity prevalence will require interventions at multiple levels, drawing from a range of theories and frameworks from behavioural and social science.