

increased glucose uptake and increased fatty acid synthesis.

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**Health professionals' perspectives on assessing children's weight status: A case study of Rockhampton**



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**Introduction:** Childhood overweight and obesity is a major public health issue, and its treatment, and management starts with identification of the problem. Currently in Australia, there is a lack of clarity with regard to responsibility for routine assessment of children's weight status.

According to the National Health and Medical Research Council "Clinical Practice Guidelines for Management of Overweight and Obesity in Adults, Adolescents and Children in Australia" assessing weight status is recommended to be undertaken by health professionals during standard consultations with children. Research suggests this is not occurring in practice and little is known about health professionals' perspectives on this routine assessment.

This study explored health professionals' opinions about routine undertaking of primary school children's weight status.

**Methods:** Twenty-six semi-structured interviews with health professionals who interact with children as a part of their professional role were undertaken in the area of Rockhampton in June–July 2016.

**Findings:** Health professionals recognise a need for change in practice in assessing primary school children's weight status. A multi-level approach is necessary for addressing childhood overweight and obesity. There is a need for long-term commitment from the Governments to implement "ask and assess" and provide health services to address obesity, simple and consistent education across all primary health care and education settings as well as within communities.

**Conclusion:** Clarity is needed regarding responsibility for assessing primary school children's

weight status to effectively address childhood obesity.

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**Why do parents enrol in a childhood obesity management program?**



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**Introduction:** Despite the high prevalence of childhood overweight and obesity enrolment to weight management programs remains difficult, time consuming, costly and has limited effectiveness. Previous studies explored barrier to recruitment into children's weight management programs but only a few have explored the issue from the perspective of the parent or applied a theoretical framework to describing the decision to enrol in a weight management program. The aim of this paper was to understand what factors influence parental decision to enrol in the Parenting, Eating and Activity for Child Health Program, a program for childhood obesity management.

**Methods:** Semi-structured qualitative telephone interviews were undertaken with 21 enrollees in a childhood obesity management program. Questions were based on Theory of Planned Behaviour.

**Findings:** Parents tended to be aware of the child's weight issue prior to deciding to enrol in the program. Theory of Planned Behaviour was inadequate in explaining the decision to enrol because parents had attempted to address their child's weight issue themselves and had sought help from a number of people including health professionals. The participants' decision to enrol in the program was influenced by the evaluation of their previous attempts and their child's emotional state.

**Conclusions:** Health professionals should use opportunities during their contact with parents to raise child's weight issue and to provide support and encouragement so that parents seek help from programs before reaching point of despair.

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