

doi:10.1017/S1368980012001528

Obesity in Italian children: monitoring and communicating to promote healthy lifestyle

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Introduction: In 2007, the Italian Ministry of Health promoted a national school-based nutritional surveillance system, called OKkio alla SALUTE, coordinated by the National Institute of Health and part of the WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative. Information on dietary habits and physical activity were collected for children aged 8–9 years. After the first data collection in 2008, nationwide communication activities were planned.

Method: Data were collected using questionnaires addressed to children and parents and the children were weighed and measured by trained local health staff using standardized equipment. The International Obesity Task Force cut-offs were used to classify the children as underweight, normal weight, overweight and obese. The prevalence of behaviours associated with obesity was evaluated. To communicate the results and give general advice, a leaflet for parents, a kit for teachers and a poster for paediatricians were produced. The principal messages included in these materials to help children adopt a healthy life were: (i) have a healthy breakfast and a light midmorning snack at school; (ii) eat fruit and vegetables 5 times a day; (iii) drink water instead of sweetened drinks; (iv) walk or use the bicycle to go to school; (v) spend <2 h a day watching TV and movies, using computers for entertainment and playing video games; (vi) do at least 1 h a day of physical activity; (vii) do not have a TV in the children's room; (viii) sleep for at least 9 h a night; (ix) check the children's weight and height regularly.

Results: Of the 48 176 students weighed and measured, 23.2% were overweight and 12.0% obese. Eleven per

cent of the children did not have breakfast and 82% consumed mid-morning calorific snacks; 23% of parents said their children did not consume fruits and vegetables daily; 25% of the children usually practiced physical activity for 1 h a week. Mothers correctly identified the status of 52% of overweight children and 14% of obese children. These results showed the need for effective means of communication. Drafts of the informative materials, produced by the National Institute of Health in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and the regional coordinators, were tested on 813 parents, 49 schools and 176 paediatricians. Parents evaluated the leaflet positively, but criticised the language and suggested to reduce the number of messages underlining those that are essential and explain better what should be done to improve the overall health and the well-being of their children giving clear messages. Paediatricians suggested that the written part should be more concise, leaving more space for illustrations. The materials were modified according to these comments and suggestions, and the final versions were distributed to the participants of the second data collection: 50 000 parents, 2500 schools and 8000 paediatricians. The materials were very well received.

Conclusion: This surveillance system is a valuable tool to monitor the obesity epidemic and children's behaviour. Communication is a first step to promote awareness and empowerment processes in the population. (i) Conflict of Interest: none and (ii) Funding research relating to this abstract was funded by Ministry of Health/CCM.

doi:10.1017/S136898001200153X

Guam Sustantia Program: reversing childhood obesity through research-based social marketing and branding strategy

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Guamanians love fiestas, which is the feast of the village patron saint. Pork and chicken barbecue, red rice, and red meat, a good number of sweetened pastries, soda, and other sweetened drinks, are normally served, including Guam's 'staple' food Spam[®] served as kela-guen. It is during fiestas that over-eating is indulged, learned and acquired as a habit, because the food is free and the fun is for everyone. When the Guam Public School System conducted a body mass survey last school year, about 65% of elementary-school students in the northern villages of Guam were found to be overweight or obese. The survey is not yet complete, but the pattern is already showing. Childhood obesity is an epidemic on Guam. The Sustantia Project is a social marketing and branding strategy aimed at reversing the childhood obesity epidemic in Guam. Sustantia, the local Chamorro word for nutritious, aims at helping Guam parents and their children access nutritious and affordable food through a logo-identifier system. The Sustantia logo is a smiling, tongue lickin' face of a child to depict that low-energy, low-fat, nutrient-dense foods are also 'yummylicious'. Food items that cost \$3 or less and meet the nutrition criteria established by the coalition's certified nutritionist are identified by the Sustantia logo, as shown above, making it easier for parents and children to pick nutrition-packed food items that are also affordable. The Project also has an active living component, called Project SPARK, which stands for

'Sports, Physical Activity and Recreation Komunitat', which aims to engage Guam children in recreation sports and physical activity through Adopt a Playground project, Playground Watch project, Sustantia Sports Youth of the Week, Walk for Walkways, etc. The Sustantia project targets children in the northern villages of Dededo and Yigo. The 2000 U.S. Census shows that Dededo Village, the most populated village on the island, had a median household income of USD37 654 and serviced 28% of the total island student population. Yigo Village is the next most populated village. The two villages share very similar demographics, with 39% of the populations having native Chamorro and/or Pacific Islander ethnicity and 47% have Asian background. Launched on 1 July 2009, the Sustantia project enjoyed tremendous media attention through the implementation of a comprehensive research-based media and communications strategic plan. Using a child-friendly branding strategy coupled with a creative media connection that enabled low-cost primetime TV and radio exposure, island-wide newspaper coverage and an effective partnership with the target village mayors and the largest grocery chains on Guam, Sustantia is becoming a buzzword on Guam. With the introduction of a Sustantia jingle that is characteristically Pacific islander, the jingle's message to 'eat all your veggies, get up and play, drink a lot of water, put the soda away' is effectively becoming embedded in the minds of Guam children.

doi:10.1017/S1368980012001541

Results from a satisfaction questionnaire (SQ) for an outpatient service of paediatric nutrition

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Introduction: Satisfaction questionnaire (SQ) is widely used, but, in Italy, is not widespread within Public Administrations, even less within Public Health Services. In an Outpatient Service of Nutrition and Dietetics mainly targeted to chronic patients like obese ones, however, they represent a fantastic opportunity to understand either system's and staff's weakness points, or the attitude of patients/families towards the Service/staff, herewith somehow allowing to foresee at least one of the components possibly influencing patient's compliance to the therapeutic process.

Method: A simple, anonymous, service-tailored SQ for families (and teenage patients) was developed, including

19 closed questions +1 open space for observations. The SQ has already been proposed to 198 families/patients and filled by 146 (drop-out 26.30%).

Results: Apparently, families/patients are much satisfied of (i) booking service (98.63%), (ii) waiting time (78.77%), (iii) attention received by staff members and (iv) Service setting (0% for 'little'/'not at all' satisfied families). Questions 18 and 19 serve as controls, to evaluate customer's sincerity in answering the previous ones. They confirm a general satisfaction for the staff helpfulness 'to listen to them' (54.11%) and 'to give useful information about patient's health status' (44.52%), kindness (60.96%) and professional standards (43.15%). Nonetheless, it appears