



Community Programs

Evaluation Report: Part 1 Baseline Data Collection

Executive Summary

Introduction

Levels of overweight and obesity in children and young people have been trending upward since the mid 1980's. In response to this the South Australian State Government has released the *eat well be active* Healthy Weight Strategy for South Australia 2006-2010 and funded a number of initiatives including the *eat well be active* Community Programs. The *eat well be active* Community Programs comprise two intervention communities – one in Morphett Vale and the other in the rural city of Murray Bridge. The aim is to contribute to the healthy weight of young people and their families in these communities by increasing healthy eating and physical activity through the provision of locally relevant and sustainable interventions. To determine the effectiveness of this approach a comprehensive evaluation framework (including qualitative and quantitative methods) has been developed and the data collected and compiled in this report form the first part of the baseline data for the quantitative evaluation of *eat well be active* Community Programs (Australian Clinical Trials Registry Number: ACTRN12607000414415).

Methods

Year 5, 6 and 7 students from Government, Catholic and Independent schools in 2 urban (Morphett Vale and Sea and Vines) and 2 rural (Murray Bridge and Port Pirie) communities were invited to participate in the evaluation of the *eat well be active* Community Programs at the end of 2006. Sea and Vines and Port Pirie form the comparison sites for evaluation purposes.

1732 students completed either or both of the self-report nutrition and physical activity surveys. These surveys were developed specifically for *eat well be active* Community Programs to ascertain the students' behaviour, knowledge and attitudes about their eating and physical activity patterns as well as descriptions of their home, school and local environments, key contributors to the maintenance of healthy weight.

In conjunction with these surveys, to determine the prevalence of overweight and obesity, 1637 students had height, weight and waist circumference measures taken.

Key Findings

Overweight and Obesity

49.9% of the sample (n=1637) were boys and 50.1% were girls.

56.8% students were from urban regions and 43.2% from rural regions.

31.2% of students were from Morphett Vale, 25.6% from Sea and Vines, 20.3% from Murray Bridge and 22.9% from Port Pirie.

The prevalence of overweight was 18.5% with a further 6.6% obese, combined overweight and obese level of 25.1%. There were no significant differences in prevalence of combined overweight and obesity between boys and girls.

There were significant differences in age, with prevalence being greatest in the youngest age group (9-10 years) at 31.1%.

There were no differences in prevalence of overweight and obesity combined between urban and rural regions for all students or for sexes separately.

Boys had greater overall BMI z-score but lower waist circumference z-score than girls.

The total sample had greater BMI and waist circumference z-scores than the UK reference populationⁱ.

There were no significant anthropometric differences between rural and urban boys and rural and urban girls. Girls had greater waist circumference z-scores than boys in both rural and urban regions, while urban boys had greater BMI z-scores than urban girls.

Physical Activity

77% of students are usually physically active at school (recess/lunch/PE lesson). Boys were more likely to be physically active at school than girls.

45% of students used active transport at least once per day travelling to or from school.

67% of students used local parks and recreational facilities outside of school hours at least once per week. Boys were more likely to use local recreational facilities than girls.

80% of students exceeded the 2 hour recommended screen time per day. Boys were more likely to exceed the recommended screen time than girls.

51% of students reported that the local environment was supportive of physical activity. Boys were more likely to report that the local environment was supportive than girls.

36% of students agreed the school environment was conducive to physical activity.

58% of students reported support for physical activity in their home.

The vast majority of students believe that physical activity is fun.

28% of boys and 36% of girls played no club sport in the previous 12 months.

49% of boys and 59% of girls played no school sport in the previous 12 months.

School soccer was played most often by both boys and girls.

The most played club sports were Australian Rules football (AFL) for boys and netball for girls.

Both basketball and tennis were popular amongst boys and girls at both school and club level.

Nearly one third of girls did not engage in any moderate to vigorous physical activity at recess time.

About one quarter of girls did not engage in any moderate to vigorous physical activity at lunch time.

Less than one half of boys and girls reported engagement in vigorous physical play after school.

Nutrition

75% of students reported an excessive intake of non-core foods.

64% of students reported an excessive intake of sweetened beverages.

43% of students consumed adequate amounts of water.

45% of students reported an adequate daily intake of fruit.

Only 13% of students reported an adequate daily intake of vegetables.

79% of students reported having something for breakfast everyday.

53% of students reported helping to buy groceries or prepare dinner at least 1-3 times per week.

76% of students hold healthy attitudes towards fruit intake.

51% of students hold healthy attitudes toward vegetable intake.

91% of students reported a healthy fruit and vegetable home environment. This refers to vegetables being served at home, fruit is available to eat at home and encouragement from their parents to eat fruit and vegetables.

71% of students reported having water on their desk at school.

36% of students correctly reported the number of fruit serves they should consume.

77% of students correctly reported that a child of their age should consume 3-5 serves of vegetables each day.

Report prepared by Dr Michelle Jones, Dr Anthea Magarey, Dr Jim Dollman, Dr Fiona Verity, Nadia Mastersson and Emma Clover, February 2008.

<http://www.dh.sa.gov.au/pehs/branches/health-promotion/hp-eat-well-be-active.htm>

ⁱ McCarthy, HD., Ellis, SM & TJ Cole (2003) 'Central Overweight and obesity in British youth aged 11-16 years: cross sectional surveys of waist circumference.' *British Medical Journal* 36 22 March 624- doi:10.1136/bmj.326.7390.624
Cole TJ, Freeman JV & MA Preece (1995) Body-mass index reference curves for the UK, 1990. *Arch Dis Child* 73: 25-9.