



Nutrition and Physical Activity



Knowledge Bulletin

Issue 5 ◆ 19 August 2020

Welcome to the fortnightly Nutrition and Physical Activity Bulletin (which replaces the HIIRC Weight Management website). The Bulletin has a New Zealand focus and provides links to new research, evaluations, guidance, resources and upcoming events on the topics of nutrition, physical activity, obesity, sport and recreation in relation to health and wellbeing.

Key international literature and guidance from similar jurisdictions is also featured.

You can forward this newsletter to others who may be interested in receiving it. They can register and subscribe [here](#). You can also access other recent issues of the digest [here](#).

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Diet and nutrition

[Mandatory salt reformulation: Australia's new voluntary programme leaves sour taste with health experts](#)

The Australian government has released sodium targets to be implemented voluntarily over the next four years by the food and beverage industry. However, public health researchers are critical and urge that these should be made mandatory to ensure compliance.

[Five ways to reboot the global food economy to make it healthier for all](#)

In this article, Professor Corinna Hawkes, Distinguished Fellow with The George Institute for Global Health, Australia, outlines her five-point plan to 're-set' the food economy to address malnutrition – undernutrition and obesity – plaguing one-third of the global population.

Her plan includes: 1. *Financing for healthy food*, by making a healthy diet affordable; 2. *Make junk food less attractive*, by regulating the industry; 3. *Profit with purpose*, by rating food businesses on their social and environmental performance, not share value; 4. *Redefining success*, by rating food businesses on how healthy their products are; and 5. *Public sector leading the way*, by supporting programmes to feed the vulnerable.

[Effects of Popular Diets on Anthropometric and Cardiometabolic Parameters: An Umbrella Review of Meta-Analyses of Randomized Controlled Trials](#)

This review assesses the impact various popular diets have on adiposity and cardiometabolic health, including: low-carbohydrate, high-protein, low-fat, paleolithic, low-glycemic-index/load, intermittent energy restriction, Mediterranean, Nordic, vegetarian, Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH), and portfolio dietary pattern.

The only diet that scored on both levels, without any potentially adverse outcomes, was the Mediterranean diet.

Physical activity, sport and recreation

[TECHNICAL REPORT FOR BODE³ INTERVENTION PARAMETER SELECTION: MOBILE HEALTH FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY](#)

This technical report, published by the Department of Public Health, University of Otago, reports the outcomes of the Health Research Council-funded Burden of Disease Epidemiology, Equity and Cost-Effectiveness Programme (BODE³).

The BODE³ Programme 2016-21 provides a review of physical activity interventions to estimate the impact they have on cost savings and health outcomes and whether these could be used in the New Zealand context. The interventions assessed included mass media campaigns and primary care prescriptions promoting the use smartphone apps (mhealth) targeting adults.



[Implications of attending the closest school on adolescents' physical activity and car travel in Dunedin, New Zealand](#)

This research provides an analysis of the New Zealand Travel Survey and self-reported data, in order to identify the impact of the mode of travel used to get to school on adolescents' levels of physical activity.

They found that those living in close proximity to their school were more likely to use active commuting and quantify the benefits as these relate to students' moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity levels and traffic congestion.

To encourage more active transportation, the researchers suggest that increasing school zoning may be one way to influence this.

Obesity and weight management

[Achieving physical health equity for people with experience of mental health and addiction issues - Evidence update: July 2020](#)

Te Pou o te Whakaaro Nui (the National Centre for Information and Workforce Development in Mental Health, Addiction and Disability) has launched the 2020 Equally Well evidence update on the state of physical health of people with mental health conditions and/or addiction.

[The full evidence update](#) and [summary paper](#) describe the disparities in physical healthcare, including issues in achieving adequate levels of physical activity and nutrition and why these exist; the barriers that get in the way; and what needs to be done to achieve equity in supporting the physical health of people living with disabilities, mental health issues and addiction.

[Long-term outcomes \(2 and 3.5 years post-intervention\) of the INFANT early childhood intervention to improve health behaviors and reduce obesity: cluster randomised controlled trial follow-up](#)

The Australian INFANT Program targets first-time parents of four-month old infants to promote healthy eating and physical activity.

Follow-up assessments were made at age two and five years and indicated favourable results in behavioural terms (e.g. screen time, sweet snack intake), in spite of the lack of evidence for lower adiposity compared to control children at the five year mark.

This being the case, the researchers support longer-term follow-up to assess the impact of these behavioural successes instigated at this very early stage in life.

[The whole day matters: Understanding 24-hour movement-guideline adherence and relationships with health indicators across the lifespan](#)

Canada was the first country to establish the 24-hour movement guidelines; however, a number of other countries, including New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, as well as the World Health Organisation, have followed suit.

This review looks at 20 countries' guidelines in terms of their recommendations about the composition of movement for specific age groups and the implications these have for health outcomes across the lifespan.

Health promotion

[Aotearoa, land of the long bare cupboard. Part 7: Food Insecurity in New Zealand](#)

This edition of the series of reports produced by the Child Poverty Action Group looks to the future: *We can build the Zero Hunger Generation in our new COVID-19 World.*

The report looks specifically at the National School Food programme and what needs to be done to sustain and maximise the benefits, so that our children can live a new reality. *“Zero Hunger is also a goal that, frankly, can be achieved - especially here in Aotearoa.”*

[Pacific Islands Food and Nutrition Action Group](#)

Part of the New Zealand Nutrition Foundation, the Pacific Islands Food and Nutrition Action Group or PIFNAG aims to improve the health and wellbeing of Pacific peoples living in New Zealand through eating well and exercising regularly.

The group meet regularly to talonga ideas as to how to better promote health and wellbeing within Pasifika communities, by engaging with central and local government and other support agencies, as well as Pacific community leaders and health professionals.

PIFNAG are involved in a number of projects promoting healthy eating, such as the National School Food programme.

Non-communicable diseases

[The Potential of Anti-Diabetic Rākau Rongoā \(Māori Herbal Medicine\) to Treat Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus \(T2DM\) Mate Huka: A Review](#)

This article explores the antidiabetic effects of rākau rongoā (particularly karamu, kūmarahou and kawakawa) and calls for the scientific validation of the plants' properties, to enhance the understanding and appreciation of the value of mātauranga (traditional knowledge) in the treatment of mate huka (type 2 diabetes).

[A geospatial analysis of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus and the food environment in urban New Zealand](#)

This research provides an analysis of the spatial clustering of the prevalence of type 2 diabetes and the relationship this has with the types of food available in New Zealand's cities.

The findings illustrate how the promotion of unhealthy food options is directly associated with poor health outcomes and hope that this will support the consideration of these environmental influences in policy decisions.

[Correlation between epicardial adipose tissue and body mass index in New Zealand ethnic populations](#)

This University of Otago study found that the usual measure of using the body mass index (BMI) to identify risky levels of epicardial adipose tissue (EAT), the fat surrounding the heart that increases risks of cardiac arrest, are only evident in Europeans, not Māori or Pacific peoples.

In the Otago [press release](#), lead researcher Dr Sean Coffey explains the issue, *“The use of BMI as an indicator for cardiovascular disease risk among Māori and Pacific people may be misleading and contribute to the disparate outcomes among these populations.”*

Tools and resources

[Getting help to stay well when you have long-term conditions](#)

Health Navigator New Zealand provides a range of resources, including this video about how to get help and stay well when you have long-term conditions, such as diabetes.

[Healthy Built Environment Checklist](#)

Developed by the Centre for Population Health in New South Wales, Australia, the checklist provides a useful tool to evaluate built environments and offers suggestions as to how to enhance these to improve health outcomes in 11 areas: healthy eating; physical activity; housing; transport and connectivity; quality employment; community safety and security; open space and natural features; social infrastructure, social cohesion and connectivity; environment and health; and environmental sustainability and climate change.

[Kickstart your health](#)

With the slogan: *Better Health – Let's do this!* the UK's National Health Service's Better Health campaign site provides a range of tools, apps, information and links to support the community's journey toward better health and wellbeing.

News

[Food taxes and subsidies would bring major health gains, study shows](#)

Otago University News, 1 July 2020

A consumer tax on the saturated fat, salt and sugar content of food, accompanied by a 20 per cent subsidy on fruit and vegetables, would bring major benefits for the health sector, researchers from Otago, Auckland and Melbourne Universities say.

The researchers have published estimates of the health gains and cost savings to New Zealand's health system, which a combined tax and subsidy scheme would bring.

There are downsides to food taxes and subsidies, including administration and other costs, lead researcher, Professor Blakely says. *"Nevertheless, the health gains and cost savings from food taxes and subsidies require serious policy consideration and public discussion."*

The research paper, 'The effect of food taxes and subsidies on population health and health costs: a modelling study' is published in [The Lancet Public Health](#).

Impact of obesity on COVID-19 symptoms

Sydney University News, 31 July 2020

University of Sydney academics respond on the UK government's Better Health campaign to address obesity and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson revealed his own "wake up call" when told his weight may have impacted the severity of his COVID-19 symptoms.

[Professor Luigi Fontana](#) from the University of Sydney's Charles Perkins Centre and Sydney Medical School (Central Clinical School) says there is some data suggesting a link between obesity with poor COVID-19 outcomes.

"Two in three Australians are overweight or obese, a condition that markedly increases the risk of being admitted to intensive care and having poorer outcomes, including higher mortality, when infected with COVID-19," says Professor Fontana.

PRESS RELEASE: "HEALTHY TRANSPORTATION COALITION ASKS THAT FEDERAL STIMULUS MONEY SUPPORT TRANSIT, CYCLING AND WALKING—NOT DRIVING"

Healthy Active Living and Obesity Research Group, Canada, 29 July 2020

HALO Director, [Dr Mark Tremblay](#), was quoted for his thoughts on active transportation:

"It is clear from the past few months that access to parks, green spaces, and safe active transportation routes has been incredibly important in helping our citizens preserve their mental and physical health through this difficult time," says Dr Mark Tremblay, Director of the Healthy Active Living and Obesity Research Group, CHEO Research Institute, and Chair of Outdoor Play Canada.

"It has also become clear that opportunities for social and environmental connections, recreation, play, and active transportation in the outdoors are not readily available to all. We have an opportunity now to think about how we can shape our city moving forward, in a way that promotes, protects, and preserves access to the outdoors for the health of all citizens, across all ages—we have a responsibility to do so," says Tremblay.



Upcoming events

[Māori Health Promotion - tools to help us improve Māori health outcomes](#)

Mon, 24 August 2020

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM NZST

Join Trevor Simpson and the Health Promotion Forum team in this interactive webinar looking at and discussing how we can improve our approach to Māori health.

Introduction

In this webinar we will discuss some of the important elements of Māori Health Promotion planning and practice. To be effective in our work in Māori communities, we will need a number of tools in the kete. As we know, some of these tools, skills and knowledge are unique to Māori world views, values and beliefs. So, what are some of the things we need to know from the outset that will leverage our work and improve Māori health outcomes?

[World iron awareness week](#)

24 - 30 AUGUST 2020

Iron deficiency remains an ongoing issue for many New Zealanders, with many unaware they have deficient levels.

Find out the key facts and learn more about the importance of iron, as well as access brochures, posters and recipes.

