

Obesity part 3 - What's topical?

By Consultant Physicians Dr Millicent Stone and Dr Steven Hurel

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— What's topical?

– Emerging Government Policy

The UK government has released plans for the new 'better health' campaign as part of their Obesity Strategy. The campaign's aim is to encourage adults to improve their health by making lifestyle changes including diet and exercise, which will help decrease their risk of serious illness, including Covid-19. The government has introduced free resources to encourage people to lose weight, such as a new app focusing on a 12 week NHS Weight Loss Plan and other initiatives such as 'Couch to 5K'. The Obesity Strategy also includes changes to advertising regulations; this includes the ban on junk food adverts before 9pm, the display of calories on menus and legislating the end of promotion of foods high in fat, sugar or salt by restricting volume promotions e.g. buy one get one free.

– Sugar Levy

The UK introduced a sugar tax in 2018 in an effort to slow the rapid growth of obesity rates. The tax wasn't intended to reduce consumption but was instead aimed at encouraging manufacturers to decrease the sugar content in their soft drink products. Although it is too early to analyse the effects on obesity rates, the tax has incentivised over 50% of manufacturers to reformulate to decrease their sugar content. The money raised from the levy is going towards spending on school sports programmes and healthy breakfast school clubs.

– Bariatric Surgery

The UK government has released plans to increase the NHS's capacity to conduct weight loss surgery with the aim to tackle Britain's 'obesity crisis' (Telegraph, 2020). Currently less than 1% of patients who are identified as individuals who could benefit from surgery actually receive it.

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