

# HIGHLIGHTS CIOI 2017 (INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY)

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BY

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## GENERAL

- Conference with 400 participants, 150 speakers ([www.cioi2017.com](http://www.cioi2017.com))
- Organised by the National Institute of Health Dr Ricardo Jorge as Collaborating Center of WHO/Europe, with the support of the Minister of Health and the high level endorsement of the President of Portugal.
- Presided by Dr Ana Rito, principal Investigator of COSI Portugal (the WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative) and CEIDSS (Portuguese nutrition centre)
- WHO support and therefore no funding from food industry, which is special for a nutrition conference.
- Excellent set up and top key note speakers from European obesity scientific networks.
- The conference was about children, and they had a prominent role in the programme: introducing speakers; entertainment in breaks; and children from around the world asked their questions to prof Philip James.

## HIGHLIGHTS, per topic

### Prevalence:

- Despite indications, obesity is not levelling off yet (Ahrens)
- There is a social gradient in obesity for children and adolescents: often more obesity in lower SES, but not in all cultures. In e.g. China, Brazil, India more obesity in higher SES. The expectation is that in time it will become more and more a lower SES issue.

### Social and behavioural impact of obesity:

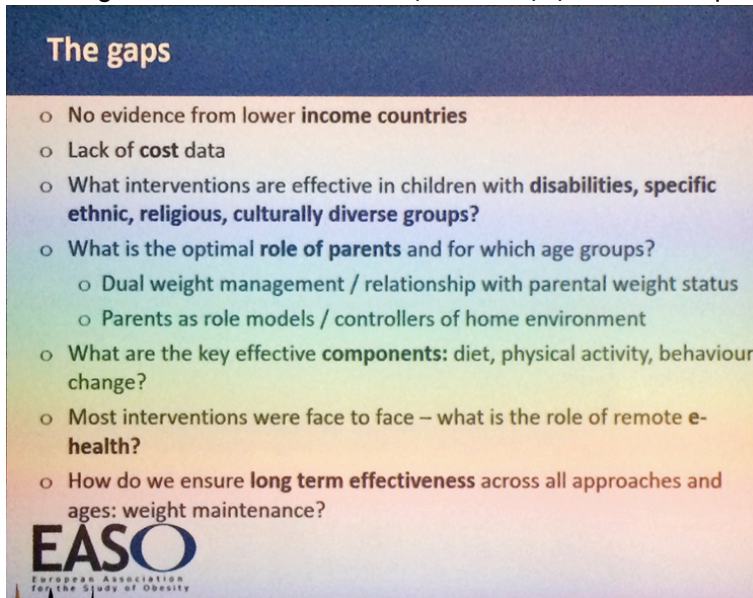
- The public has little understanding of the causes of obesity and the difficulty to cope with these many determinants. The public has no difficulties in blaming a child with obesity or her/his parents. In an inspirational session, Thinking and communicating 'Own fault big belly' is an absolute error and harms many children for no reason (Tommy Visscher).
- Stigma of obesity is common and there is a pervasive expression of anti-fat attitudes. Certainly not all children with overweight/obesity have social problems. The literature shows evidence on how concepts of self-esteem and victimization play a role in explaining the impact of stigmatization (Andrew Hill).
- Children 6-7 yr with severe obesity are rejected by peers. Social damage to these children should not be overlooked. (Andrew Hill)

### Marketing:

- Marketing to children; WHO defined in 2016 what it is, and guides governments on how to limit impact. [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/322226/Tackling-food-marketing-children-digital-world-trans-disciplinary-perspectives-en.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/322226/Tackling-food-marketing-children-digital-world-trans-disciplinary-perspectives-en.pdf)
- Pedro Graça presenting the website of the WHO Euro Action Network on Reducing marketing pressure on children
- To monitor marketing to children in stores the SWEEP method was developed (Andersen, Norway)
- EU pledge (voluntary): Tim Lobstein shows how companies flout the self-regulation EU pledge on junk food adverts while claiming high levels of compliance
- Regulation in place in UK, but unhealthy food is still advertised during peak times in children anyway (Jason Halford). Regulations need to be enforced.

## Interventions :

- EU project JANPA sets criteria & shares good practices of nutrition and physical activity interventions ([www.janpa.eu](http://www.janpa.eu)). Preview shown from webbased toolbox which will be launched Sept 2017.
- Challenges in intervention area (see slide) (Nathalie Farpour-Lambert & Harry Rutter):



## Towards a healthy schools environment:

- Many countries have school meals, money spent vs quality is under discussion
- Key note from Emma Shipley (Jamie Oliver Foundation). Jamie has huge impact, and is often asked to advise other regions. For that he liaises with leading nutrition scientists such as Phil James and Graham MacGregor. Part of the audience dislikes the link to 'Jamie brand'. The question is how to use people like Jamie to increase the impact of science.
- Finland shared their school meal system (since 1940-ies): free meals, fully integrated in teaching programme (Marjaana Manninen)
- Netherlands shared healthy school canteen approach, and how to check the healthiness of the canteen with a simple scan (Gerda Feunekes). Participants showed a lot of interest in the approach, and asked whether it would be applicable outside NL.
- The EU defined procurement criteria for schools (Sandra Caldeira):  
<https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/news/helping-eu-schools-become-springboard-healthy-diet-and-lifestyle-habits>

## Policy:

- Harry Rutter expressed a view on systems approach, and noted that we seem to have forgotten the lessons by Sir Geoffrey Rose that a population approach is deemed the most successful; approach combating the major chronic diseases.. . When we work in complex systems we have to embrace a degree of failure. Complex is different from difficult. Complex refers to a range of characteristics or circumstances under which a variety of determinants do or do not play a role.
- Prof Philip James makes a plea to have nutrition in the curriculum of doctors. Still missing in most countries.
- How to solve the obesity problem. WHO Europe (Gauden Galea) is clear that it needs policies across all sectors taking health systematically into account. He saw some similarities with the tobacco and alcohol issue. Price, availability, advertising, labelling, treatment play in all domains.

- Self regulation vs legislation: Tim Lobstein for World Obesity showed that industry evaluations conclude that self-regulations are effective based on a selection of evidence, while independent researchers do also include the more critical studies and conclude that self-regulation is inadequate. Stronger measures are needed.
  - Public private partnerships have led to reformulation of products, to a better balance of the vending of healthy and unhealthy foods, and to restriction of unhealthy items in school meals.
  - Dr. Joao Breda (WHO Offices for Europe) presented that, despite large progress in recent years, policy monitoring by WHO/Europe reveals large inconsistencies in marketing restriction approaches across countries in Europe.
  - Throughout the congress it was debated that a change in public opinion is needed to take effective policy actions in our combat of childhood obesity
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