

Combating childhood obesity – A multi-factorial approach

Indra Taneja
New Jersey Medical School, USA

Childhood obesity in developed countries has reached an epidemic level and still rising. Problem appears to be migrating to developing economies where there had been traditional concerns about under-nutrition and communicable diseases. Children who are obese generally have a much higher risk of becoming obese adults with a higher incidence of onset of diabetes, cardiovascular diseases at an early age, leading to disabilities and premature death. Obesity is a chronic disease that can start at an early childhood and sustains for lifetime. Overweight condition is generally precursor to obesity and it is most effective to manage overweight condition before it progresses to obesity. Therefore, weight control at early childhood level of 2 to 5 years and continuing through adolescence and adulthood is more effective. Once controlled at early childhood, risks substantially decrease as we age, providing long term benefits for the individual, family and society. Thus, obesity is a preventable disease only if there is a collective responsibility among all the stakeholders – individual, family, government policies, school, and public health interventions, starting at early childhood. Obesity has multi-factorial and complex etiology of higher caloric intake than consumption, sedentary life-style, and to certain extent social and environmental factors. There is a concurrent concern of underdevelopment and stunting of growth amongst children from all socio-economic which needs to be monitored by growth charts. Social, psychological, health and economic consequences are discussed along with a multi-factorial prevention measures of dietary, physical activity, behavior modification, environmental factors, based on experiences for an urban population in USA.

Biography

Indra Taneja graduated from Lady Hardinge Medical College, New Delhi, India and did her Pediatrics residency and Chief residency at University Hospital-University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. She has been Assistant professor and attending physician since 1978. For the first 17 years she was assigned as a "Pediatric Director for the Maternal-Infant Care Program" (MIC) at the New Jersey Medical School and an educator of residents and medical students. And for the last 17 years she has been one of the key members of Primary care out-patient setting teaching and training medical students and residents.

Indra Taneja's clinical, educational, and research foci have always been centered on preventative care initiatives that promote equity in healthcare for children born into adverse socioeconomic or environmental circumstances.

During her 34 years of service at the University Hospital and the New Jersey Medical School, she has been providing care for more than 33,000 children and adolescents. It is from working with such a diverse population -- socially, economically, and educationally -- that her earnest desire to address social issues and develop interventions to mitigate adverse influences in her clients' life, has been fostered.

taneja.om@gmail.com