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Addressing childhood obesity through community-centered nutritional interventions

Daniel Okoye

University of Lagos, Nigeria

Childhood obesity has become an escalating global health challenge, affecting millions of children across diverse socioeconomic environments. This study examines the effectiveness of community-centered nutritional intervention programs implemented in urban and semi-urban regions of Lagos, Nigeria. With rising access to calorie-dense processed foods and declining levels of physical activity, early preventive strategies remain critical to reversing long-term health consequences such as diabetes, hypertension, and early cardiovascular disease. The research evaluates a 12-month intervention involving school-based nutrition education, community-driven physical activity programs, parental engagement workshops, and collaborations with local food vendors to promote healthier meal options. Findings reveal substantial improvements in children's body-mass index trajectories, nutritional knowledge, and engagement in physical exercise. Notably, the involvement of parents and caregivers significantly increased adherence, demonstrating that household participation remains vital for sustainable change. Additionally, behavioral assessments showed reduced consumption of sugary beverages and processed snacks, alongside increased intake of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. The integration of culturally relevant educational methods and local community leaders played a key role in overcoming barriers related to food preferences, affordability, and awareness. The study concludes that community-centered, culturally tailored programs can substantially mitigate childhood obesity, especially when interventions extend beyond the classroom to include family and public-health partnerships. Scaling such programs across low- and middle-income countries could greatly improve child health outcomes and reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases later in life.

Biography

Daniel Okoye is a pediatric public health specialist at the University of Lagos, with expertise in childhood nutrition, obesity prevention, and community health promotion. He has led several large-scale intervention projects aimed at improving child wellness in underserved regions. His research integrates cultural, socioeconomic, and behavioral factors to design family-centered preventive strategies. Prof. Okoye is widely published and actively collaborates with international health organizations on global childhood nutrition initiatives.

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