Scotland Policy Conferences:
Policy priorities for tackling obesity in Scotland

“A assessing the strategy’s potential to narrow health inequalities”

Dr David Blane
Academic GP, Glasgow
@dnblane
Overview

- Obesity and Socioeconomic Circumstances (SEC)
- Determinants of obesity-related inequalities
- A framework for tackling inequalities in obesity
- Assessing the Diet and Obesity Strategy
What do we mean by health inequalities?

• “…the unfair and avoidable differences in people’s health across social groups and between different population groups. They are most commonly associated with socio-economic inequalities, but can also result from discrimination.”

Obesity and Socioeconomic Circumstances (SEC)

• **Men** living in the most affluent areas have the lowest obesity levels
  – levels are higher but broadly similar in all other areas

• **Women** living in the most affluent areas have the lowest obesity levels
  – obesity progressively more common as deprivation increases

• **Children**: x2 obesity gradient
  – worsened in recent years, especially in most deprived areas.

Determinants of obesity-related inequalities

Pregnancy → Childhood → Adulthood → Obesity-related health problems

Determinants of obesity-related inequalities

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Determinants of obesity-related inequalities

- **Individual-level**: Education, Employment and Income influence obesity risk through: access to health information and the ability to act on it; access to healthier food options and opportunities for physical activity
- **Community-level**: Access to recreational facilities; density of fast-food outlets; family and social support
- **Societal-level**: Advertising of HFSS foods; Built environment; Weight stigma and discrimination; access to NHS weight management services

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<tr>
<th>Approach to tackling health inequality</th>
<th>Level of intervention</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<td>Disadvantage</td>
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<td>Gap</td>
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<td>Strengthening individuals</td>
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<td>Health education, health promotion and social marketing; diet and exercise advice; weight-management advice and monitoring</td>
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<td>Access to physical fitness facilities and healthy food; green spaces, walk-ability and the built environment; traffic light labelling</td>
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Effectiveness Hierarchy

Effects of different policy options

Size of population health benefit

Downstream

Upstream

Effectiveness Hierarchy

Effects of different policy options
(evident for tobacco control, dietary salt, transfats & calories)

Size of population health benefit

Downstream → Upstream

Assessing the Diet and Obesity Strategy

- Action on price promotions of junk food
- Action on junk food advertising
- Action on food purchases for consumption outside the home
- Investment to support people with Type 2 diabetes to lose weight
- Preventative services including information, advice and support for children and families on healthy eating
- Practical support for small and medium sized food manufacturers to reformulate and develop healthier products
- Opportunities for people to be more active
- Working with the public sector and a wide range of partners to support local improvement work on diet and weight
“Interventions that rely less on individual choice and more on changes to the wider environment are essential in making healthier choices easier when we eat at home, eat out or eat on the go.”

- Importance of Early years ✓
- Whole population approaches more likely to reduce inequalities ✓
- Multi-sectoral coordination ×

Source: Capewell S, Graham H. (2010) Will Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Widen Health Inequalities? *PLOS Med* [https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000320](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000320)