

Obesity highest in children from lower income areas

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(PhysOrg.com) -- School children from lower socioeconomic areas are one-and-a-half times more likely to be overweight or obese compared with children living in wealthier areas, a new study has found.

The study of primary school-aged children also found almost one in three children aged six to 12 years are either overweight or obese.

Study author Rachel Sutherland said: 'Of huge concern was that by age six and seven, around 30 per cent of these kids were already overweight or obese.'

The study, published in *Nutrition & Dietetics* by Wiley-Blackwell, collected data on 2,224 children aged six to 12 years from 16 randomly-selected primary schools in the Hunter region of New South Wales.

The researchers called for intense efforts to tackle child obesity in high-risk groups, such as young children and children from lower socioeconomic areas.

'Our research suggests approaches to obesity prevention need to include younger kids,' said Ms Sutherland, an Accredited Practising Dietitian.

Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) Executive Director Claire Hewat said: 'It's time we all stopped fighting about who is to blame or who has 'the answer' and start exploring a range of solutions needed to have any useful effect.'

‘What happens at home has the biggest effect on what kids eat, so any effort to address childhood overweight and obesity must start here.’

DAA wants the Federal Government to provide financial support to assist Australian families get the skills and help they need to feed their families healthy food.

Key study findings:

- By age six, 32 per cent of children were either overweight or obese
- 31.5 per cent of girls were overweight or obese, compared with 25 per cent of boys
- 34 per cent of children in low SES areas were overweight or obese, compared with 22 per cent of children from high socioeconomic areas

Between 1985 and 1995 childhood overweight doubled and obesity tripled in Australia.

Link: [www3.interscience.wiley.com/jo ... l/121382015/abstract](http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/jo...l/121382015/abstract)

Provided by Wiley

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