

Child obesity can be a taboo subject

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(Medical Xpress)—Both doctors and parents are reluctant about raising the issue of childhood obesity, according to a new study.

Despite most GPs recognising it as a potential health burden, 40 per cent of a small group surveyed said they struggled to raise the issue with [parents](#) and 70 per cent said they raised the topic once the child had left the room, the study published in the journal *Obesity Research & Clinical Practice* found.

Some GPs indicated they had difficulty raising the topic for various

reasons including the sensitivity of the topic, the possibility of conflict or that the chat could trigger other health issues, such as an eating disorder or depression.

Dr Kay Jones, from Monash University's Department of General Practice, said health care professionals might need guidance in tackling the ever-growing public [health](#) issue, especially when parents could not see there was one.

"[Childhood obesity](#) has a high risk of becoming a chronic disease requiring life-long weight management," Dr Jones said.

"Generally, all acknowledged that childhood obesity is a sensitive issue with both GPs and parents preferring the other to raise the topic.

"Supporting GPs through education programs, updating medical software and recognition of obesity as a chronic disease by the Federal Government would assist GPs to work with families GPs to improve the assessment, management and treatment of childhood obesity in general practice."

One parent surveyed felt the topic "was fairly sensitive, but appreciated when the GP did bring it up".

Generally frustrations expressed by GPs and families were around issues outside their control, such as government and school policy, lack of resources, unhealthy product advertising and parents giving in to the child's demands.

The study also found that the absence of BMI charts in medical software exacerbated the issue.

More information: [www.sciencedirect.com/science/ ...](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/...)

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Provided by Monash University

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