

Motivational interviewing can positively impact childhood obesity

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Pediatricians and dietitians who used motivational interviewing techniques to counsel families about their young child's weight were successful in reducing children's body mass index (BMI) percentile 3.1 more points than comparison children over a 2-year period, according to a study to be presented Sunday, May 4, at the Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) annual meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Motivational interviewing is a patient-centered communication style that uses techniques such as reflective listening and shared decision-making to elicit how and why patients might change their health behaviors.

The study was conducted with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Pediatric Research in Office Settings Network, which collaborates on research with pediatric practices throughout the U.S. Researchers assessed the impact of [motivational interviewing](#) delivered by primary care pediatricians, supplemented by MI counseling from dietitians, on BMI among children 2 to 8 years of age who were already overweight or obese.

The trial is one of the first large-scale randomized trials to show significant reductions in BMI using motivational interviewing delivered by pediatricians and registered dietitians.

"The two most encouraging aspects of the results were the significant reduction of the BMI percentiles among participants, and the relatively high completion of BMI counseling by primary care providers," said lead

author Ken Resnicow, PhD. "The amount of training and number of sessions used in this study we believe can be realistically implemented in real world clinical settings."

The study demonstrates that motivational interviewing can be a powerful tool to help health care practitioners address child obesity. As one way to help pediatricians learn motivational interviewing techniques, the AAP in April launched a free web and mobile app called "Change Talk: Childhood Obesity." The app simulates a virtual practice environment in which [health care providers](#) assume the role of a pediatrician and decide what to say to a mother and her son about his weight.

More information: Dr. Resnicow will present "Can Brief Motivational Interviewing in Practice Reduce Child Body Mass Index? Results of a 2-Year Randomized Controlled Trial," at 2:25 p.m., Sunday, May 4. To view the study abstract, go to www.abstracts2view.com/pas/view...p?nu=PAS14L1_2600.29. The research will be presented during the AAP Presidential Plenary & Annual Silverman Lecture, which takes place from 12:30 – 4:30 p.m. in the Vancouver Convention Centre.

A related abstract, "Are Graduating Residents Prepared to Engage in Obesity Prevention and Treatment?" will be presented at 1 p.m. Saturday, May 3. To view the abstract, go to: www.abstracts2view.com/pas/view...?nu=PAS14L1_1533.509

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