

SCOPE program developed to engage communities in preventing childhood obesity

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A multidisciplinary group of researchers from British Columbia has developed a participatory action research program to help address healthy body weight in children.

The SCOPE (Sustainable Childhood Obesity Prevention through Community Engagement) program has a simple message and was developed to engage communities to take action to prevent childhood obesity. The first phase of the SCOPE program was funded by Child Health BC, an initiative of BC Children's Hospital, and was carried out in communities in British Columbia. The results of this study were recently published in the journal *Biochemistry and Cell Biology*.

The SCOPE program promotes 'Live 5-2-1-0', which encourages children to enjoy five or more fruits per day; to power down—no more than two hours of screen time per day; to play actively for at least 1 hour per day; and to choose healthy foods—zero sugar-sweetened beverages.

'In order to truly address the complex issue of [childhood obesity](#), researchers need to work in partnership with community stakeholders who influence the environments in which children live and play. This partnership approach is critical to achieving sustainable change across multiple sectors of a community so that the healthy choice is the easy choice for children,' says Dr. Shazhan Amed, lead author on the study. 'It is critical that funding agencies not only recognize the need for projects like SCOPE, but also appreciate the time, effort, resources and funding that are required to generate a community-wide coordinated effort to

create healthier environments for children. There is not one solution, nor any one individual, organization, or sector that is solely responsible.'

Insufficient financial capacity and resources were identified as significant barriers to pulling a large community together. SCOPE helped the communities work smarter not harder through partnership, sharing of resources, and minimizing duplication of efforts.

The SCOPE program will continue to adopt, adapt, and evaluate the usefulness of SCOPE in other communities and to gather information within existing communities about impact and engagement across a broader variety of organizational capacities, seasons, and program timelines.

At the time of the study, the SCOPE program was funded by Child Health BC, which is supported by donors to BC Children's Hospital Foundation.

More information: *Biochemistry and Cell Biology*, [DOI: 10.1139/bcb-2014-0127](https://doi.org/10.1139/bcb-2014-0127).

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