

Perceptions of childhood obesity prevention policies among parents in Turkey

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Childhood obesity is a major health issue in Turkey. The World Health Organization recently found that between 20 and 25 percent of Turkish children aged 10–19 years are overweight or obese. A recent study of fourth grade children in Ankara found over one-third to be overweight or obese, much higher than anticipated.

CUNY SPH is collaborating with Hacettepe University in Turkey's capital city of Ankara to strengthen the research and translation capacity in a region that is heavily affected by obesity and type 2 diabetes. To decipher perceptions of obesity prevention measures among parents by socio-economic strata (SES), CUNY SPH faculty Sean Haley, Terry Huang and Sheng Li led a study which was recently published in the Journal of Pediatric Nursing.

The study found strong recognition of [childhood obesity](#) as a problem among parents in Ankara, suggesting acknowledgement of the health issue across economic strata. Industry and the media were ranked high as influencers. While schools were seen as important in obesity prevention, healthcare providers and government were ranked lower. Overall, parents reported greatest support for school-based interventions, more limitations on marketing to children, greater opportunities for physical activity and restrictions on unhealthy foods. Fiscal policies such as taxes on unhealthy foods received the lowest support. Degree of support for [obesity](#) prevention policies was generally higher among high-SES [parents](#) compared to those from lower SES groups.

"Future research will seek to more clearly identify opportunities for prevention interventions by SES and gender," Haley says.

More information: Prevalence of childhood obesity and related parental factors in Ankara, Turkey. www.emro.who.int/in-press/research-ankara-turkey.html

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