

Motivational interviewing approach does not reduce BMI in children

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A motivational interviewing (MI) strategy seems not to be effective for reducing childhood obesity, with youth in the intervention arm gaining more weight, according to [a study](#) published online Jan. 29 in *Pediatrics*.

Ken Resnicow, Ph.D., from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and colleagues randomly assigned 18 pediatric primary care practices to receive the Brief Motivational Interviewing to Reduce BMI [body mass index] (BMI²⁺) intervention or continue with usual care (UC). The intervention was composed of four components: four sessions of in-person and telehealth MI counseling by pediatric clinicians; six telephone MI counseling sessions with a registered dietitian; text message reminders and tailored motivational messages; and [educational materials](#) for parents. The change in the percentage of the 95th percentile of BMI was assessed as the main outcome.

The researchers found that for the main outcome, there was a significant treatment-by-time interaction, favoring the UC group (b = 0.017). A greater relative increase in the percent of the 95th percentile of BMI was seen for youth in the intervention arm.

"MI delivered by pediatric clinicians and registered dietitians did not improve the weight status of participating children," the authors write. "Methodologic and [cultural factors](#) as well as the COVID-19 pandemic may have contributed to our findings."

An [accompanying editorial](#) is found here.

More information: Ken Resnicow et al, Outcome of BMI²⁺: Motivational Interviewing to Reduce BMI Through Primary Care AAP PROS Practices, *Pediatrics* (2024). [DOI: 10.1542/peds.2023-062462](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2023-062462)

Laura Rolke et al, Improving the Effectiveness and Equity of Child Obesity Interventions, *Pediatrics* (2024). [DOI: 10.1542/peds.2023-064453](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2023-064453)

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