

# How effective are interventions at reducing socioeconomic inequalities in obesity among children and adults? Two systematic reviews

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**Declared competing interests of authors:** none

Published January 2015

DOI: 10.3310/phr03010

## Plain English summary

Effectiveness of interventions at reducing inequalities in obesity

Public Health Research 2015; Vol. 3: No. 1

DOI: 10.3310/phr03010

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## Plain English summary

Obesity is an increasingly common condition in the UK and is associated with diabetes, heart disease, stroke, hypertension, osteoarthritis and certain forms of cancer. Obesity levels are higher in more deprived population groups. Health professionals need to better understand what works to reduce these inequalities between social groups. We used systematic review methods to examine the effectiveness of interventions at reducing inequalities in relation to (1) adult and (2) child obesity and to examine (3) how such public health interventions are organised, implemented and delivered. Our two systematic reviews searched for all studies of interventions available worldwide; we assessed the quality of the studies and then collated and summarised the results. This makes such complex and diffuse information more accessible. Our reviews found 76 studies of inequalities in obesity in children and 103 in adults. This evidence suggested that interventions that aim to prevent, reduce or manage obesity do not increase inequalities and that some interventions reduced the social gradient in obesity or decreased obesity among more deprived groups. For children, school-delivered and environmental interventions, as well as interventions that use community empowerment mechanisms, were potentially effective in reducing obesity in more deprived areas. For adults, primary care-delivered tailored weight loss programmes and community-based weight loss interventions were the most effective, although only in the short term and mainly for low-income women. Studies were generally not of a high quality and there were few UK studies, few studies of society-wide interventions and no studies that assessed the cost of interventions. More UK studies are needed, especially of interventions among men and adolescents.

# Public Health Research

ISSN 2050-4381 (Print)

ISSN 2050-439X (Online)

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## This report

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by the PHR programme as project number 09/3010/14. The contractual start date was in July 2011. The final report began editorial review in July 2013 and was accepted for publication in April 2014. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The PHR editors and production house have tried to ensure the accuracy of the authors' report and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the final report document. However, they do not accept liability for damages or losses arising from material published in this report.

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