Diet, physical activity and behavioural interventions for the treatment of overweight or obese children from the age of 6 to 11 years

Globally, the prevalence of overweight and obese children and adolescents has increased. While originally a problem mainly found in high-income countries, rates have now risen in some low- and middle-income countries and childhood obesity has now become a global public health crisis. Childhood obesity results from “an accumulation of excess body fat and can increase the risk of both short- and longer-term health consequences”, flagging the urgency to address this challenge. The objective of this systematic review was to assess the effects of diet, physical activity and behavioural interventions for the treatment of overweight or obese children aged 6 to 11 years.

The included randomised controlled trials all targeted behaviour changing interventions delivered as a single or multicomponent intervention, in any setting, using any delivery methods, which aimed to treat paediatric obesity. Primary outcomes included changes in measured body mass index (BMI), BMI z-score and weight, as well as the report of adverse events. Overall, despite low-quality evidence, “multicomponent behaviour-changing interventions that incorporate diet, physical activity and behaviour change components may be beneficial in achieving small, short-term reductions in BMI, BMI z-score and weight in children aged 6 to 11 years.”