Economic evaluation of lifestyle interventions to treat overweight or obesity in children

Given the growing prevalence of childhood overweight and obesity, it has become a public health priority to prevent and treat obesity in both children and adults in an attempt to reduce morbidity and premature mortality. Consequently, the objective of this study was “to estimate lifetime cost-effectiveness of lifestyle interventions to treat overweight and obese children, from the UK National Health Service perspective.”

A wide range of interventions were evaluated and could be categorised into three groups: interventions aimed at modifying behaviour, diet and/or physical activity delivered to groups of children and/or parents or delivered to individual families and technology-based interventions used in the home or community aimed at promoting physical activity or reducing sedentary activities. The ten randomised controlled trials included in the study showed a broad range in effects among interventions. Similarly, costs per child ranged from £108 to £662. Overall, the study points towards some evidence of the cost-effectiveness of lifestyle interventions to treat childhood overweight and obesity. However, both the financial and health effects may not appear until later-on in the life of the child.