Reducing childhood obesity in Poland by effective policies

Across Europe, obesity is highly prevalent among children, especially among children with less-educated parents. In addition to severe physical health repercussions, obesity also has psychosocial consequences and can lead to behavioural and emotional difficulties. Poland is a country that has a prevalence of obesity higher than the EU average, with considerable difference between age groups. Specifically, the prevalence of overweight including obesity among preschool-aged boys and girls is 12.2% and 10.0% respectively. Childhood obesity is a complex challenge that requires multi-component interventions and a comprehensive approach throughout the life-course. The purpose of this report was “to facilitate the development of an action plan and implementation of the strategy dimensions around childhood obesity by providing evidence-based policy options adapted to the national context.”

The report formulates seven different action areas. Among them, action area six is focused on weight management. Specifically, it advocates for “family-based, multicomponent, lifestyle weight management services delivered by a multi-professional team with appropriate training and resources should be ensured for all children and young people who are overweight or obese, as part of Universal Health Coverage.” In Poland, policy options for reducing the prevalence of childhood obesity for action area 6 is recommended to follow two steps:

- Step 1: ensure specific care for overweight children by providing training and educating paediatricians.
- Step 2: set up an incentive system that covers the costs of counselling and treatment of obese children.