Systematic Review of Community-Based Childhood Obesity Prevention Studies

Childhood obesity has become one of the biggest public health threats in high income countries. Increasingly, we observe a shift towards community-based interventions. This is particularly important in the case of childhood obesity, as children have limited control over their social environment as well as in control the obesogenic environment that they are constantly exposed to. This study systematically reviewed community-based childhood obesity prevention programmes in the United States and high-income countries.

Community-based interventions were designed as interventions resulting from policy, legislative, built environment, and economic/pricing/food subsidy changes that aimed to reduce population risk of obesity. Interventions of interest included a modification of diet, physical activity, sedentary activity of a combination of these. A total of nine articles were included in this review. Overall, the evidence points towards the implementation of a combination of interventions in multiple settings as the most effective weight gain prevention strategy. Despite noticeable benefits at the individual level, the cumulative impact across populations has the potential to yield significant public health benefits.