The cost-effectiveness of a school-based overweight program

The prevalence of overweight children has doubled in the past two decades, and studies show that overweight children are unlikely to go back to normal weight in adulthood. Schools could be a pivotal setting to address childhood obesity given their ability to promote physical activity and nutrition interventions. Focusing on reducing the prevalence of childhood obesity could have substantial economic benefits. This study aims to assess the cost-effectiveness ratio and the net benefit of the Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) intervention programme, based on parameters estimated through the El Paso trial.

Using the overall parameters and lifetime medical costs, the cost-effectiveness ratio was calculated to be US$900, indicating the cost-effectiveness of the intervention. Furthermore, lifetime differential costs between obese males and non-obese males and obese women and non-obese women were US$9,716 and $11,086 respectively. Based on the results from this study, it seems to justify the use of school-based overweight programmes to tackle childhood obesity in a cost-effective and net beneficial way.