The prevention and treatment of childhood obesity

Today, obesity is regarded as a global epidemic. While not one cause can be identified to explain the rising prevalence of childhood overweight and obesity, an increase in sedentary lifestyles and changes in dietary patterns and eating habits have been identified as key factors. Through randomised controlled trials (RCTs), this paper focuses on the effectiveness of interventions in the prevention and treatment of childhood obesity.

The included RCTs look at school-based programmes, physical activity interventions, multifaceted interventions, family-based interventions, physical and health promotion interventions, behaviour modification programmes, family-based behaviour modification programmes, behaviour modification with no parental involvement and pharmacological interventions. Overall, there seems to be some evidence that multifaceted school-based programmes that promote physical activity and the modification of dietary intake while targeting sedentary behaviours may lead to reduction in obesity rates in school children, especially girls.