

Stakeholders Views on Why Childhood Obesity is Rising in Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract : Child obesity is on the rise globally. According to the World Health Organization, the number of obese children would increase to 70 million by 2025 if no intervention is made. An increase in the prevalence of overweight and obesity amongst school children in Lagos State, Nigeria has been established but specific factors promoting its prevalence are unknown. This aim of this study is to identify the commonly expressed factor(s) responsible for the rise in prevalence of child overweight and obesity in Lagos, Nigeria. Five focus group discussions were conducted with different groups of stake-holders involved in child care, namely: parents, teachers and health workers. Participants were recruited using a purposive sampling method; a validated question guide was employed for the discussion sessions. The discussions were recorded, collated, analysed using Grounded theory to extract themes. Six themes emerged from the discussions as follows: Civilization and lifestyle imbalance resulting from busy work schedules of young mothers leading to adoption of westernized culture promoting preference for processed and fast food meals; insecurity and congestion of the state which discourages out-door activities; ignorance of the populace on the prevalence of child obesity in the state; inadequate educative and enlightenment programmes in schools and by the Nigerian government; myths on child care and body physique and societal perceptions of the children born into affluent homes. Some of the factors responsible for the rise in the prevalence of child obesity in Lagos, Nigeria have been identified. Preventive strategies to control the prevalence of obesity in children residing in Lagos state is considered for further studies.

Keywords : Childhood Obesity, factors, lagos state, stakeholders

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