

Controlling obesity in canada



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Public Health Policy: Controlling Obesity in Canada

The World Health Organisation defined health in its constitution as “ a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” (WHO, 1946) The health of an individual is affected by multiple factors like personal hygiene, access to health care, socio-economics, genetics, living and working environment. The term public health is used for the efforts which are made to promote individuals health.

Public health

The field of Public health can be described as the science of wellness of society, community or an organisation by disease prevention to promote health by collective efforts and choices of a society. Public health is different from medicine as it is mainly concerned with the promotion of health and well-being of a society not by treating the sick but by preventing the spread of a co-morbidity or morbidity. The community benefited by public health department can be of any size. Promotion of health involves multidisciplinary approach involving other fields of community medicine like epidemiology, economics, biostatistics, behavioural sciences, healthcare providers, public policy, environmental health, community health and occupational safety. (Winslow and Amory, 1920).

By using health indicators as a source of information about the health status of a society public health increases the health of the society by preventing the diseases and promoting a healthy life style. Public health measures can be exemplified as hand washing, use of condoms, breast feeding, promoting hygiene, vaccination, promoting exercise, use of boiled water etc.

Public health ethics

Public health decreases the cost of healthcare by preventing the diseases keeping in view the ethics and norms of a society. While implementing a health policy there can be a conflict of some moral issues and restrict the choice of living for an individual. For an individual a policy may appear to have some negative effects but if we see society as a whole it proves beneficial. The ethics and mortalities are incorporated in the field of medical practice, health policies and medical research. With the advancement in the field of science, the study of application of moral values ethics by the scientists lead to formation of a new discipline called bioethics and medical ethics. Medical ethics are taken into consideration while making a health policy by public health departments worldwide. This subsidiary is called public health ethics.

Public health policy

The Nuffield Bioethics Council has identified following ethical and moral points that should be taken into consideration while making a health policy. A policy should have following characteristics:

- Produce health benefits
- Prevent health morbidities
- Encourage participation and distributes its benefits to all factions of the society without disparities
- Be founded on the principles of justice and transparency
- Respect individuals liberty of action

- Respect individuals privacy, confidentiality, respect minorities and universal human rights
- Build and maintain trust (The Nuffield Bioethics Council)

Besides this the any health policy must be implemented by government involving the public sector and third party approach. Unlike developed countries developing countries still lack the monetary resources and trained staff in their public health departments.

Fundamentals of Public Health Policy

While forming a public health policy first there should be evidence of the cause of the disease. The evidences in this case are authentic peer review research works. After that there is scientific assessment of the risks, cost estimation and transparency.

Obesity

Obesity A Cause Of Many Diseases

Obesity is proved to be a main cause of increase in mortalities as it causes many co morbidities. (David et al. 1999) But the good thing is that obesity is a preventable morbidity. Obesity increases the risk of a list of diseases which are beyond the scope of this paper. To be concise obesity increases the risk of ischemic heart disease, diabetes mellitus type 2, infertility, stroke, osteoarthritis and many more. Libraries are stuffed with the research reviews suggesting obesity as a cause of different diseases. Since 1980 the individuals suffering from obesity has been doubled as in 2008, 1. 4 billion

adults and 40 million children have been found to be suffering from obesity. (EASO, 2014)

Obesity In Canada

In Canada 50% adults are obese or over weight. In the years 1981-1996 obesity among children ages seven to 13 has tripled. The percentage of obesity in adults is increasing since 1978. Till 2007 the percentage grew from 15% to 29%. (Statistics Canada, 2009) and if this keep on growing then by 2040 70% of the adult Canadian population will be obese.

Obesity costs Canada's economy \$2. 7 billion and the health care system \$1. 6 billion in 2000-01. From 1985 to 2000 about 57, 000 deaths in Canada were caused by obesity. (Katzmarzyk, Ardern. 2004)

Recommended Health Policy For Obesity

Controlling obesity will require some drastic measures by the government as the problem is so adverse and will become worse in the future. The government have to implement such measures that address a large group of population. Following are my recommendation about controlling obesity in Canadian population.

Hate Obesity Education Campaign

Government must launch an effective campaign for increasing the awareness about obesity among individual this can be implemented by organising seminars, workshops and lectures in schools, colleges, universities, work places and in community gathering. By involving teachers

and mothers this strategy can be proved very effective, one proposal from my side is the labelling of food products which are high in fats and calories. We can label the amount of product which can be taken by an individual in a day. "Hate Obesity" campaign will be very helpful by affective advertisement by our health department like we conduct no smoking campaign.

Food Policy

Food policy should be reviewed particularly regarding the increase in use of junk food and canned food. Over the years the population is increasingly more attracted toward the junk food. The food companies must be taken under taken under regulation and they must provide the information about food ingredients and calories to their consumer. This would be very hard for the government due to immense revenue and tax they generate. Huge motivation and courage at the government side is needed to control this elephant.

Promotion of Physical Activity

According to recent research majority of children and adults do not fit in the international guideline of physical activity. One of the reasons is the access to the playground and parks. This would need some huge funding from the government for providing these facilities. Moreover private organisations can be involved to provide the opportunities to their workers like physical fitness competitions and benefits against the physical fitness. This also needs regulations and legislation. Politicians and civil society can come up with a solution to this problem.

Promotion of Home Made Diet

The use of premade food is a very unhealthy culture growing in our society. Community awareness program for the mothers can be conducted to educate the mothers. If mothers are convinced that obesity is a disease not an ordinary problem then this fear can be used to promote home made food. The people must know what they are eating. The choice of food to eat must be in the hands of the mothers

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