Investing in health literacy for childhood obesity prevention: the project “Papa Bem”

FULBRIGHT BRAINSTORMS 2012
CHILDHOOD OBESITY: THE 21ST CENTURY EPIDEMIC
Lisbon, 4 May, 2012
HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL - PORTUGAL PROGRAM
IN TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH AND INFORMATION

FCT Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia
MINISTÉRIO DA CIÊNCIA, TECNOLOGIA E ENSINO SUPERIOR

www.hmsportugal.pt
The problem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>overweight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>obese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>overweight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>obese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>overweight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>obese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-35.5%</td>
<td>overweight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8-12.5%</td>
<td>obese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Portugal is one of the four European countries with highest prevalence of overweight at age 4.  

---

1Carmo et al. (2008); 2Sousa (2010); 3Padez et al. (2004); 4Cattaneo et al. (2009); 5Miranda et al. (2010)
Why health literacy?

Health literacy is the ability to obtain, process, and understand health information to make informed decisions about health care.

Low literacy and numeracy skills...

1. Poor understanding of health information, poor family health behaviors, and poor child health outcomes

2. Worse knowledge about breastfeeding, difficulty understanding food labels and portion sizes, and higher BMI

6 Sanders et al. (2009); 7 Kaufman et al. (2001); 8 Rothman et al. (2006); 9 Carlisle et al. (2007)
Why health literacy?

Health literacy is the ability to obtain, process, and understand health information to make informed decisions about health care.

Low literacy and numeracy skills...

Poor understanding of health information, poor family health behaviors, and poor child health outcomes

Worse knowledge about breastfeeding, difficulty understanding food labels and portion sizes, and higher BMI

“Health literacy is likely one of the largest contributors to our nation’s epidemic of overweight and obesity.”

---

Why health literacy?

- Policies
- Environments
- People

Encouraging results
Modest impact

Birch & Ventura (2009)
Why health literacy?

Encouraging results
- Setting
  - Schools ➔ Families and communities

Modest impact
- Stage
  - School age ➔ Pregnancy & early years
- Approach
  - Weight-centered ➔ Health-centered
  - Eating and activity patterns ➔ + parenting

11Birch & Ventura (2009); 12Davis et al. (2007); 13Olstad & McCargar (2009)
Why health literacy?

- Risk perception
- Energy balance
- Growth charts
- Food labels
- Portions sizes
- Amount of exercise
- Critical ability

How?

Opportunities to learn & act

Demands + Expectations

Individual Skills

Health Literacy

The challenge

14Huiziga et al. (2008)
Adapted from: Davison & Birch (2001)
Approach

Healthy eating
Being active
Parenting

Hunt & Rudolf (2008)
Approach

Approach

15 Davison & Birch (2001); 16 Hunt & Rudolf (2008)
What do parents think and to what are they most receptive? Self-reports, interviews...

Child growth and development is monitored by health professionals who also help to clarify the messages.
Contents production

Prevention
Early Detection
Treatment
Healthy growth

Nutrition
Physical Activity and Sleep
Family
Community
Contents production

- Layout and design
- Organization
- Language and style
- Active learning
Contents production

Content

- Evidence-based
- Population needs
- Cultural suitability

Exploratory study
Content evaluation
Contents production

Layout and design

- Identity
- Attractive
- Positive, childish, healthy
- Consistent
Contents production

Organization

- Logical
- Headings
- Chunks
- Keypoints
Contents production

Language and style

• Everyday words
• Small and simple sentences
• Examples
• Active voice
• Friendly, engaging
• Questions and answers
• Quizzes

Content evaluation
Contents production

Active learning

- Awareness/resistance
- Active user
- Action oriented

Healthy growth messages
Different formats
Specific suggestions, positive models, “change tools”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Content</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Handouts</th>
<th>Videos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obesidade infantil</strong></td>
<td>Mamã, eu não quero fumar</td>
<td>Obesidade infantil: o que contribui vs o que previne</td>
<td>Obesidade infantil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Animations</strong></td>
<td>Brincadeiras activas para um crescimento saudável</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audio</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vida activa, vida saudável</td>
<td>Formação dos hábitos alimentares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quizz</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Obesidade Infantil - Programa Harvard Medical School Portugal

Organização sem fins lucrativos
Este é um espaço do Programa Harvard Medical School Portugal dedicado ao tema da Obesidade Infantil. Aqui você encontrará toda a informação sobre este problema, quais são suas consequências e algumas dicas de como combatê-lo e preveni-lo. Siga-nos!
Barriers

- Accessibility
- Lack of risk perception
- Difficulties in recognizing the problem
- Eating as a consumption attitude or a rewarding act
- Low levels of literacy
- Obesogenic environment
Suggestions

• Make materials available through the NHS and to anyone through a website
• Professionals investing before + during pregnancy
• Prepare parents for breastfeeding and nutrition education of very young children
• Help parents to understand meals as opportunities for communication and education
• Alert educators for developing children’s critical ability (eg. decodifying marketing advertisements)
• Association with other transformative strategies
Video
Papa Bem
alimentar é educar!

Obrigada
References


References


