Task Force Aims to Cut Childhood Obesity to 5%

BY JANE ANDERSON
FROM THE ARCHIVES OF PEDIATRIC AND ADOLESCENT MEDICINE

In an initiative aimed at cutting childhood obesity rates to 5% by 2030, the White House Task Force on Child Obesity report to the president spelled out a broad range of recommendations—from increasing breastfeeding to improving eating patterns and physical activity levels among children.

Nearly half of all U.S. children were obese or overweight in 2007, but substantial variations in obesity and overweight rates between the states may point the way to reducing childhood obesity in the states with the heaviest children, a study showed.

Girls in particular were becoming more obese between 2003 and 2007, the investigators found.

Social and behavioral factors such as poverty level, access to parks or sidewalks, lower levels of physical activity, and television viewing accounted for up to 45% of the variance between states, reported Copal K. Singh, Ph.D., and associates at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Rockville, Md.

Overall, 16.4% of U.S. children aged 10-17 years were obese, and 31.6% were overweight in 2007. Obesity prevalence grew by 10% overall nationwide and by 18% for girls between 2003 and 2007, according to the study in which the authors used data from the 2003 and 2007 National Survey of Children’s Health to determine obesity and overweight prevalence in each of the 50 states (Arch. Pediatr. Adolesc. Med. 2010 May 3; [doi:10.1001/archpediatrics.2010.84]). Girls also experienced a 9% increase in overweight prevalence.

Dr. Singh and associates found that Mississippi was the state with the biggest problem, with nearly 22% of children obese and another 44.5% of children overweight. Oregon, meanwhile, had the lowest prevalence of obesity (9.6%), while Utah had the lowest prevalence of overweight in children, with 23.1% of children overweight.

Between 2003 and 2007, while obesity prevalence increased, especially in girls, the rate of obesity fell by 32% for children in Oregon and nearly doubled among girls in Arizona and Kansas. For children in several states, including Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, Georgia, and Kansas, the adjusted odds of being obese was more than twice that of children in Oregon.

Geographic rates of childhood obesity and overweight followed those for adults, the study showed, with several Southern states such as Mississippi, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, and Tennessee in the top quintile for both.

“It is conceivable that recent trends in dietary factors may have contributed to the increase in childhood obesity at the national level as well as in specific states,” Dr. Singh and associates concluded.

Disclosures: The authors did not report any financial disclosures or financial support for the study.

Michelle Obama is shown unveiling the findings of the Childhood Obesity Task Force report last month.

In 2007, 48% of U.S. Kids Were Obese or Overweight

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DXA Shown to Trump BMI For Obesity Assessment

BY MIRIAM E. TUCKER
FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CLINICAL ENDOCRINOLOGISTS

Boston — Dual x-ray absorptiometry was a more accurate predictor of obesity than was body mass index in a retrospective comparison of the two measures in 1,234 adults.

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