

Symposium Description (250 words max.)

Symposium Lead (name and affiliation): Associate Professor Robyn Littlewood, CHQHHS

Rationale for Symposium: Reducing health inequities experienced among Australia's most vulnerable populations: implementing a co-designed and culturally-tailored research program, influencing systems change to tackle childhood obesity.

Topic description

The prevalence of overweight and obesity (overweight/obesity) among Australian children has doubled in the last two decades, with 1-in-4 Queensland children classified as overweight or obese. In response, the Paediatric Obesity Working Group (POWG), under the auspices of the Queensland Child and Youth Clinical Network (QCYCN), have implemented a systems-wide, action-based framework to tackle childhood overweight/obesity across the Queensland healthcare system. However, culturally diverse population groups continue to suffer the worst health of the nation due to a lack of and poor access to culturally-tailored health services. Due to the expanding cross-cultural gap in obesity prevalence, Māori and Pacific Islander (MPI – respectfully throughout) communities exhibit higher rates of overweight/obesity and consequently chronic disease. In response, the Good Start program have implemented a culturally-tailored childhood overweight/obesity prevention program and multidisciplinary treatment clinic. With strong input from Health Services Research (HSR), evaluation of these initiatives will develop a framework that is scalable to many cultural groups across Queensland. This framework will be value-based and initiate change on a systems-level, improving the delivery of health care and reducing health inequity to significantly improve health outcomes among Australia's most vulnerable populations. The fundamentals of co-design will be explored throughout this symposium, upskilling participants to implement this methodology in their relevant area.

Presentation one

Authors and affiliations

Robyn Littlewood, CHQHHS

Sebastien Brignano, CHQHHS

Overview: ***Implementing systems change and culturally-specific programs to tackle childhood overweight and obesity in Queensland*** (15 minutes)

The POWG, under auspices of the QCYCN and academic partners, have developed and implemented the first systems-wide and integrated framework for tackling childhood overweight/obesity in Queensland. *The Model of Care* guides clinicians to support local initiatives and deliver a collaborative approach to childhood overweight/obesity prevention and management, providing optimal care to children and their families. Via school-based prevention and treatment programs, Good Start aims to improve the health and wellbeing of MPI children and families. All multicultural health workers are of MPI descent, initiating a strong relationship with consumers to positively influence health behaviour change and reduce chronic disease prevalence.

Presentation two

Authors and affiliations

Sebastien Brignano, CHQHHS

Jessica Hardt, CHQHHS

Overview: ***How to effectively implement a co-design approach to program development (20 minutes)***

Preventive health care is typically driven by health professionals and desensitised to the needs of consumers, resulting in poor adherence to recommendations and limited improvements in health outcomes. Co-design promotes power equality, with successful interventions implemented in New Zealand promoting high levels of consumer empowerment to implement culturally-tailored initiatives. MPI consumers collaborated closely with a team of multicultural health workers and health professionals to co-design *Healthy Kids Healthy Families Logan (HKHF)*, an evidence-based, culturally-tailored and community-focused childhood overweight/obesity prevention program. This presentation will briefly cover the fundamentals of co-design, upskilling participants to implement this methodology in their relevant area.

Presentation three

Authors and affiliations

Jessica Hardt, CHQHHS

Overview: ***Outcomes and impact of a co-designed and culturally-tailored, childhood overweight and obesity prevention program (10 minutes)***

HKHF program success is largely underpinned by the strong sense of community ownership and empowerment promoted by co-design. Cultural-tailoring of the program to address consumer needs has resulted in outstanding uptake and acceptance within the community, with 70% of families attending all eight workshops. High participation rates have also translated into improved anthropometric indicators, with 15/25 (60%) children and 4/9 (44%) adults decreasing their BMI. Additionally, 5/6 (83%) families increased their consumption of vegetables per week indicating program effectiveness to improve self-efficacy and elicit health behaviour change. Such behavioural improvements will promote long-term improvements in obesity and its comorbidities.

Presentation four

Authors and affiliations

Kerri-Lyn Webb, CHQHHS

Jessica Hardt, CHQHHS

Overview: ***Transferring the co-design approach – implementation of a research and evaluation framework (15 minutes)***

Evaluation of HKHF will inform the development of a groundbreaking co-design framework, providing first-of-its-kind evidence outlining the effective management and treatment of childhood obesity among culturally diverse population groups. Strong input from HSR, in conjunction with the influential power of the QCYCN to initiate change on a systems level, will adapt this framework and inform future delivery of health care to other priority populations across Queensland. The provision of overweight/obesity preventive care to any child and family statewide, regardless of location or population group, will significantly improve health outcomes across generations to help close the health equality gap.

