

Tackling the problem of overweight and obesity: the Dutch approach

The Dutch Government has set itself the goal to reduce the prevalence of overweight, obesity and related chronic diseases.
The Dutch approach is to integrate chronic disease management and preventative interventions. This may serve as an interesting model for other countries.
Three organizations were initiated by the Ministry of Health to tackle the problem of overweight and obesity:



Knowledge Centre Overweight (KCO)

C.M. Renders¹, J.C. Seidell^{2,4}, R.A. HiraSing¹

kco.emgo@vumc.nl

Initially the KCO was established in 2002 to fulfil the observed need of information, knowledge and tools in daily practice for professionals, especially from Youth Health Care (YHC).

Objective

The KCO aims to enhance knowledge about prevention and treatment of overweight/obesity. It is initiated to provide professionals with access to this knowledge and to encourage research. The KCO supports the Ministry of Health and municipal health services in the development of policy in the field of overweight and obesity. KCO has a Platform that functions as a sounding board. It consists of specialists in the area of overweight and obesity in the broadest sense.

Results

- The KCO has a website (www.Overgewicht.org). This is an important tool to spread information and products of the KCO and her Platform. Since it has been set up the number of hits has increased enormously.
- The KCO has developed a Masterplan to tackle overweight within YHC. It includes a detection and prevention protocol which consists of experiences that can be used for other professions.
- Expert meetings are organised aimed at exchanging information, improving collaboration and tuning.

The Covenant on overweight was initiated in 2005 as a consequence of increased insights of the importance to change the environment (supply), in addition to individual behaviour (demand).



Covenant on overweight

C.S. Frenkel³, P. Rosenmöller³

convenantovergewicht@minvws.nl

The Covenant on overweight is a public-private partnership. It was set up in 2005 with 10 partners and now has 20 partners from the (local) government, private sector (for example the Dutch Food Industry and Supermarkets) and other organisations (like the federations of employers and employees and the Dutch Consumers Bond).

Objective

The partners of the Covenant on overweight currently work on a joint action plan 'Striking the right balance', focused on restoring the balance between eating and physical exercise. By making healthy choices easy and appealing they try to halt the trend of overweight and obesity for adults and to reverse this trend for children.

Results

The Covenant on overweight has attracted considerable attention for overweight and obesity and has instigated many, various activities regarding the settings home, school, work and leisure time. For example:

- Healthy nutrition and exercise in primary education
- Promotion of healthy choices in the selection of food in secondary education school canteens
- Playing fields in forty 'healthy neighborhoods'
- One distinctive logo to facilitate healthy choices
- Role of parents in teaching a healthy lifestyle

The Partnership Overweight Netherlands was established in 2008 as a consequence of the increasing attention from various professions to take part in the prevention and treatment of overweight and obesity.



Partnership Overweight Netherlands (PON)

J. Halberstadt^{2,4}, J.C. Seidell^{2,4}

info@partnerschapovergewicht.nl

In 2008 the PON was established as collaboration between 17 partners, which are national organizations of health care providers, health insurance companies and patient organizations.

Objective

Objective of the PON is to facilitate the development and implementation of a chronic disease management model for overweight and obesity. This model involves strategies for diagnosis and early detection of high risk individuals as well as appropriate integrated lifestyle interventions for those who are overweight and obese and, when appropriate, additional medical therapies.

The PON works towards an integrated health care system that transcends traditional boundaries of conventional health care systems and health care professions but, instead, focuses on competences of groups of health professionals who organize care from a patient oriented perspective.

The PON collaborates with organizations responsible for prevention and management of other chronic noncommunicable diseases.

Results

The PON is developing flow-charts for different age-groups and different degrees of overweight and obesity to facilitate the implementation of the National "Clinical guideline for the diagnosis and treatment of obesity in adults and children" with implications for the organization, quality assurance and reimbursement of care and prevention.

The collaboration of these three complementary initiatives shows that stakeholders relevant to the prevention and management of overweight and obesity are willing and able to work together at all levels. The ambition is to make this the first integrated, evidence based and practice based, national approach for tackling the problem of overweight and obesity.

¹ Knowledge Centre Overweight, EMGO Institute for Health and Care Research, VU University Medical Centre, Amsterdam, Netherlands
² Partnership Overweight Netherlands, EMGO Institute for Health and Care Research, VU University Medical Centre, Amsterdam, Netherlands
³ Covenant on overweight, The Hague, Netherlands
⁴ Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences, Department of Health Sciences, VU University, Amsterdam, Netherlands