

August 2011

Journals included this month:

- Australian & New Zealand Journal of Public Health
- Health Promotion Journal of Australia
- Medical Journal of Australia
- The Lancet
- Environmental Health Perspectives
- American Journal of Preventive Medicine
- Health Promotion International
- American Journal of Public Health

Other Journals include:

- Preventing Chronic Disease
- International Journal of Obesity
- British Medical Journal
- Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport

Overview

Priority area	Total Number of journal articles
Child Health	20
Obesity	14
Environment & Health	13
Nutrition	10
Physical Activity	9
Preventive Health	8
Tobacco	7
Indigenous Health	3
Alcohol	2
Injury	2
Advocacy	1
Road Safety	1

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Australian & New Zealand Journal of Public Health

Health and foreign policy: the threat from health securitisation. (C, Almeida)

Vol 35: issue 4; pages 312

Topics (keywords)

Advocacy, (public health policy)

Summary

The 9/11 terrorist attack triggered important changes to how health fits into various countries' foreign policies, and also to the dynamics and volume of developed countries' foreign aid to low-income countries, in turn reflected in international cooperation. Health has always been a foreign policy issue, but was not a high-profile item on the political agenda which was aimed more at controlling "external threats" (epidemics and diseases) which might undermine sovereign national power and elites' material interests (trade and wealth). The past decade, however, has seen health grow in importance at the global level as never before and the concept of 'health security' has become important to development and global governance.

So what? Advocacy Implications

International – particularly South-South – co-operation, after decades of gradual reorientation faces new challenges in the early 21st century. The 'politics of fear' and 'securitisation of health' have fuelled, and ensured funding for, conservative ideas and practices globally, in opposition to more cooperative structural approaches to strengthen health systems as a health determinant.

Farmers are the most trusted part of the Australian food chain: results from a national survey of consumers. (J, Henderson)

Vol 35: issue 4; pages 319-324

Topics (keywords)

Nutrition (food safety, marketing)

Summary

Trust is a crucial component of food safety and governance. This research surveyed a random selection of the population to examine its level of trust in a variety of 'actors' and organisations in the food chain. Results showed that

Farmers enjoyed high levels of trust, whereas politicians were considered less trustworthy. Supermarkets were afforded more trust than media and news outlets. Analysis determined that age and education level were significantly associated with trust in food actors, with young people finding the media the least trustworthy.

So what? Advocacy Implications

The finding that young people's trust in the media is low challenges media use in social marketing campaigns aimed to improve health and nutrition in younger age groups. Therefore Health education, including nutrition education, needs to consider the channels of communication most suited to age and social grouping.

Australian print news media coverage of sweet, non-alcoholic drinks sends mixed health messages. (C, Bonfiglioli)

Vol 35: issue 4; pages 325-330

Topics (keywords)

Nutrition, marketing, obesity, child health (junk food, sugary drinks)

Summary

This study aimed to analyse the contribution of Australian print news coverage to the public profile of sweet, non-alcoholic beverages. News media portrayal of health contributes to individuals' decision-making. The focus on sugar-sweetened beverages reflects their contribution to excessive energy intake. Results revealed that fruit juice was the most widely covered sweet drink, closely followed by carbonated, sugar-sweetened soft drinks. Overall coverage was positively oriented towards sweet drinks, with fruit juice primarily portrayed as having health benefits. Sweet drinks often enjoy positive coverage, with their health benefits and harms central to their ability to attract journalists' attention. However, the mix of coverage may be contributing to consumer confusion about whether it is safe and/or healthy to consume sweet non-alcoholic drinks.

So what? Advocacy Implications

The challenge is to highlight the sugar content of these drinks and communicate more widely the health risks of excess consumption. These goals could be achieved by a combination of public health media advocacy and social marketing. Public health media advocates could highlight the health risks of soft drinks, challenge fruit juice's status as

purely healthy question marketing, especially to children, point out the high sugar content of drinks and contribute to contests over labelling: all these topics have the potential to gain news media coverage and contribute to the goal of curbing intake of sweet drinks.

Maternal smoking during pregnancy among Aboriginal women in New South Wales is linked to social gradient. (A, Thrift)

Vol 35: issue 4; pages 338-342

Topics (keywords)

Indigenous health, Tobacco (pregnancy, socioeconomic factors)

Summary

Social gradients in Aboriginal health are seldom explored. This study describes social gradients and trends in smoking during pregnancy among Aboriginal mothers in NSW. The study revealed that Smoking was substantially higher among Aboriginal mothers compared to non-Aboriginal mothers. Analyses showed that the smoking rate among low SES Aboriginal mothers was approximately two and a half times that of high SES Aboriginal women, a similar gradient to non-Aboriginal women.

So what? Advocacy Implications

There is a need for a social inequalities approach to smoking during pregnancy, specifically targeting more disadvantaged Aboriginal mothers and all teenage mothers for smoking prevention. Strategies to access more disadvantaged mothers should not be missed through broadly focused Aboriginal tobacco control strategies.

Pre-pregnancy predictors linked to miscarriage among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in North Queensland. (S, Campbell)

Vol 35: issue 4; pages 343-351

Topics (keywords)

Indigenous health, alcohol (miscarriage, STI's)

Summary

The aim of this study was to identify preventable pre-pregnancy risk factors that may affect the prevalence of miscarriage among a cohort of Australian Indigenous women. The study revealed that a high prevalence of pre-pregnancy sexually transmitted infections and high rates of risky drinking are associated with miscarriage among young Indigenous women in rural and remote communities in north Queensland.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Community initiatives aimed at improving reproductive health should have ongoing evaluation using robust and sustainable methods, including the use of linked data.

Regional variations in pedal cyclist injuries in New Zealand: safety in numbers or risk in scarcity? (S, Tin Tin)

Vol 35: issue 4; pages 357-363

Topics (keywords)

Road safety, injury (cycling)

Summary

This study aimed to assess regional variations in rates of traffic injuries to pedal cyclists resulting in death or hospital inpatient treatment, in relation to time spent cycling and time spent travelling in a car. The study revealed that there was an inverse association between the injury rate and the ratio of time spent cycling to time spent travelling in a car. The expected number of cycling injuries increased with increasing total time spent cycling but at a decreasing rate particularly after adjusting for total time spent travelling in a

car. The findings indicate a 'risk in scarcity' effect for New Zealand cyclists such that risk profiles of cyclists are likely to deteriorate if fewer people use a bicycle and more use a car.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Cooperative efforts to promote cycling and its safety and to restrict car use may reverse the risk in scarcity effect.

Smokers have varying misperceptions about the harmfulness of menthol cigarettes: national survey data.(N, Wilson)

Vol 35: issue 4; pages 364-367

Topics (keywords)

Tobacco, marketing (menthol, New Zealand)

Summary

The aim of this study was to describe the prevalence of menthol use and perceptions of relative harmfulness among smokers in an ethnically diverse population where tobacco marketing is relatively constrained. The results revealed that various groups of smokers in this national sample had misperceptions around the relative harmfulness of menthols, which is consistent with most previous studies. These groups included: older, Māori, Pacific, Asian, financially stressed and had higher levels of individual deprivation.

So what? Advocacy Implications

This evidence, along with a precautionary approach, supports arguments for enhanced regulation of tobacco marketing and tobacco ingredients such as menthol.

Australian smokers increasingly use help to quit, but number of attempts remains stable: findings from the International Tobacco Control Study 2002-09. (J, Cooper)

Vol 35: issue 4; pages 368-376

Topics (keywords)

Tobacco (smoking cessation, socio-economic status, stop-smoking medication)

Summary

This study aimed to assess interest in quitting smoking and quitting activity, and the use of pharmacotherapy and behavioural cessation support, among Australian smokers between 2002 and 2009. The study revealed that around 40% of smokers reported trying to quit and, of these, about 23% remained abstinent for at least one month when surveyed. Low socio-economic smokers were less likely to be interested in quitting and less likely to make a quit attempt. Reported use of prescription medication to quit smoking rose sharply at the last wave with the addition of varenicline to the pharmaceutical benefits scheme.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Use of help to quit is now the norm, especially among more dependent smokers. This may reflect a realization among smokers that quitting unassisted is more likely to fail than quitting with help, as well as the cumulative effect of promoting the use of help. Given the continuing high levels of failed quit attempts, services need to be able to expand to meet this increasing demand.

Communication and behavioural disorders among children with hearing loss increases risk of mental health disorders. (A, Hogan)

Vol 35: issue 4; pages 377-383

Topics (keywords)

Child health (hearing loss, mental health)

Summary

This study examines the mental health and associated risk factors of children with hearing loss. The study revealed that Australian children with hearing problems face multiple concurrent health and developmental problems. Moreover, children with hearing problems exhibit behavioural problems when they do not understand what is going on around them.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Without appropriate interventions, these children are at risk of developing mental health disorders. Children with receptive hearing problems require access to amplification, communication training, and psychosocial support. Attention must also be given to building design to reduce physical barriers to hearing.

Health Promotion Journal of Australia

Workplace-related smoking in New South Wales: extent of bans, public attitudes and relationships with relapse. (R. Walsh)

Vol 22; Issue 2; pages 85-95

Topics (keywords)

Tobacco (workplaces)

Summary

Little research has examined issues surrounding employee smoking outside smoke-free workplaces. The study's aims were to: 1) document the proportion of NSW indoor employees covered by total workplace smoking bans; 2) examine community perceptions of employee smoking during working hours; 3) identify the characteristics of having a supportive attitude toward tobacco control in the workplace; and 4) describe relationships between smoking relapse and workplace-related smoking. Total workplace bans were reported by 92.9% of indoor employees. Community attitudes to smoking in working hours were highly negative: 77.7% agreed smoking breaks waste too much time and 85.1% opposed smoking near workplace doorways.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Indoor workplace smoking bans have achieved high coverage in NSW. Nonetheless, some workers, especially in the hospitality area, remain unprotected and legislation is required to ensure a complete ban without loopholes. Company policies and/or government legislation, such as recommended in the National Preventative Health Strategy, to restrict smoking near workplace entrances could build on this solid platform of support.

Tobacco and alcohol sponsorship of sporting events provide insights about how food and beverage sponsorship may affect children's health. (B. Kelly)

Vol 22; Issue 2; pages 91-96

Topics (keywords)

Child health, marketing, nutrition, tobacco, alcohol (sponsorship, school, sport)

Summary

A review of published literature and media and marketing reports was conducted to determine the types of food and beverage sponsorship campaigns that children are exposed to, and the effect of corporate sponsorship (including tobacco and alcohol) on children and adolescents. A large range of food and beverage sponsorship activities, in Australia and internationally, were identified for both school and sport settings. In particular, food and beverage companies have attempted to develop a marketing presence at all levels of professional and community sport. Empirical evidence from consumer studies relating to tobacco and alcohol

sponsorship has repeatedly demonstrated that sponsorship has an impact on children's product recall and product-related attitudes and behavioural intentions.

So what? Advocacy Implications

This paper provides evidence that sponsorship, particularly of sporting events and organisations, is a significant marketing tool, and its prevalence and sophistication is increasing and diversifying. As well, the demonstrated effects of tobacco and alcohol sponsorship on young people are likely to be applicable to unhealthy food and beverage companies. A range of policy and structural initiatives are possible to limit this sponsorship, including replacement sponsorship schemes

Environmental sun protection and supportive policies and practices: an audit of outdoor recreational settings in NSW coastal towns. (S. Potente)

Vol 22; Issue 2; pages 97-101

Topics (keywords)

Environment & health, preventive health (sun protection)

Summary

Thirty public swimming pools, beaches, sports grounds and skate parks were visited at two time points before and after summer and audited for the availability of sun protection, supportive policies and signage. There was insufficient shade in more than half of the observed sites at sports grounds, less than half of areas at beaches and skate parks with most of these sites relying on natural shade. Pools were more likely to have shade available over most of the observed areas and permanent shade structures, no shade was observed over any main outdoor pools. For other types of sun protection, sunscreen was the most popular product available either for free or for sale. All pools had at least one supportive sun protection policy but only two of the total 30 sites had any related signage.

So what? Advocacy Implications

This study demonstrates findings in relation to the accessibility of sun protection within youth-focused recreational settings in NSW and provides direction for the focus of future skin cancer prevention interventions for health promotion organisations and Local Government. Councils could be encouraged to promote positive sun protection policies and practices to local sports clubs via their communication channels, networks and sports ground leasing agreements, and reinforcing the role of sports clubs in the provision and encouragement of sun protection for their players and spectators.

Participation in cardiovascular risk factor and cancer screening among Australian Chinese. (N, Wah Cheung)

Vol 22; Issue 2; pages 147-152

Topics (keywords)

Preventive health (cancer screening)

Summary

A telephone survey of a random sample of Chinese in New South Wales, Australia, was conducted. The presence of, and participation in screening for, hypertension, hyperlipidaemia and diabetes were ascertained. Additionally, women were surveyed regarding breast cancer and cervical cancer screening. Generally, Australian Chinese were as likely to participate in health screening activities as the general population. However, Chinese with poor English-speaking ability were less likely to have had recent lipid testing or mammography, than those who were proficient in English. Chinese who had been in Australia for less than 10 years were also less likely to undergo Pap tests.

So what? Advocacy Implications

This study indicates that there are disadvantaged subgroups of Chinese

Australians to whom effective health promotional efforts should be directed. Well designed health promotion projects with greater involvement of opinion leaders and Chinese women themselves may overcome the embarrassment that Chinese women traditionally have about discussing women's health issues and lead to an increase in undertaking mammography and pap smears.

Medical Journal of Australia

Editors choice: Let's not admit defeat in fighting obesity. (A, Katelaris)

Vol 195; Issue 3; page 107

Topics (keywords)

Obesity (bariatric surgery)

Summary

For all of us who have tried and failed to help obese patients lose weight, the viewpoint by Proietto in this issue of the Journal (page 144) offers some explanation for our defeat. Overeating and low activity levels cause everyone to gain weight. However, the propensity to become obese is genetically predisposed, and expression of the genes involved may well be permanently up-regulated by early experience of overeating. When weight is lost, there are hormonal changes that favours weight regain. Proietto (page 144) calls for bariatric surgery to be made more widely available in public hospitals. This view has widespread support from many sectors of the medical profession.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Greater availability of gastric banding may well have some impact on the burden of chronic disease in our society. Bariatric surgery is unlikely to be our most effective approach to the obesity epidemic. It is time to look at primary prevention (maternal diet in pregnancy and infant feeding). Various legislative measures support the medical message to stop smoking and moderate alcohol intake. We need to be equally aggressive towards the obesity epidemic. This, of course, includes strategies to encourage regular daily exercise

Editorial: Don't spare the salt?(B, Neal)

Vol 195; Issue 3; page 111-112

Topics (keywords)

Nutrition (salt intake, blood pressure)

Summary

For most of human evolution, the average daily diet contained a fraction of a gram of salt and our physiology developed accordingly. A few thousand years ago, with the discovery that salt could preserve food, average intake started to rise. Now, with salt poured into the food supply, average Australian consumption levels are many times our physiological need. Populations eating the level of salt upon which we evolved are now few, but they provide a window into normal physiological processes. One of the most notable findings is that their blood pressure levels do not rise with age.

So what? Advocacy Implications

A plausible population-wide salt-reduction program that removed salt at the source could within a few years avert a similar proportion of disease burden at an annual cost of just \$10–20 million. To achieve this, the Australian Government simply needs to set and enforce salt targets for foods, as has been done in the United Kingdom. Average salt consumption would fall, mean population blood pressure would immediately follow, and the long-term rise in blood pressure with age would be attenuated.

View point: Why is treating obesity so difficult? Justification for the role of bariatric surgery. (J, Proietto)

Vol 195; Issue 3; page 144-146

Topics (keywords)

Obesity, child health, (bariatric surgery)

Summary

What is the solution to improving the management of obesity? First, we must no longer ignore the scientific evidence. It appears that once someone becomes obese, that state is physiologically defended. This newly discovered biology explains the high failure rate of obesity management. If secondary prevention is difficult as a result, we must focus our attention on primary prevention and stop children from becoming obese. The availability and promotion of high-energy foods and the absence of any obligatory need for physical activity compound the problem, but this social change is not easily reversible.

So what? Advocacy Implications

We must help the long-suffering obese in their struggle to maintain a reduced weight. In the absence of safe, effective pharmacological agents that can be used long-term, bariatric surgery is the most successful intervention for sustained weight loss. Why is it not more often conducted in public hospitals?

Letter to the Editor: Lack of caregiver supervision: a contributing factor in Australian unintentional child drowning deaths, 2000–2009. (D, Eszenyi)

Vol 195; Issue 3; page 156

Topics (keywords)

Child health, injury (drowning)

Summary

In their recent article on unintentional child drowning deaths, Petrass, Blivitch and Finch refer to the "limited detail within both police reports and findings" for South Australian cases of drowning. Since 2005, South Australia's Child Death and Serious Injury Review Committee (CDSIRC), which I chair, has considered the circumstances and causes of all child deaths in SA. The legislation governing the CDSIRC's work quite rightly precludes the publication of individual details of children's deaths, but, since 2005, the CDSIRC's annual report has given a summary of the circumstances and causes of drowning deaths for children in each year.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Although the extent and nature of supervision may be of academic interest, the prevention of childhood drowning would best be served by the ongoing promulgation of well researched public health campaigns, such as those delivered by the Royal Life Saving Society Australia and Kidsafe Australia, and attention to legislative changes that will ensure the regular inspection and maintenance of swimming pool fencing.

Letter to the Editor: Eliminating syphilis in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. (F, Bowden)

Vol 195; Issue 3; page 158

Topics (keywords)

Indigenous health (syphilis)

Summary

In their article on the decline of infectious syphilis in the Australian Indigenous population from 2005 to 2009, Ward and colleagues conclude that it "might be the right time to move toward the elimination of infectious syphilis from remote Indigenous communities". They note that another previously endemic sexually transmitted infection, donovanosis, has almost

completely disappeared from Australia as a result of an elimination program. I strongly support their call to action and believe that syphilis can, and should, be next.

So what? Advocacy Implications

The validation of a syphilis PCR test that can be used to identify early, infectious syphilis should be a research priority, one that could be carried out as part of an Australian Government-funded, centrally coordinated but locally implemented, targeted syphilis elimination program.

The Lancet

The global obesity pandemic: shaped by global drivers and local environments.(B, Swinburn)

Vol 378; Issue 9793; pages 804-814

Topics (keywords)

Obesity (food system, market economy)

Summary

The simultaneous increases in obesity in almost all countries seem to be driven mainly by changes in the global food system, which is producing more processed, affordable, and effectively marketed food than ever before. This passive overconsumption of energy leading to obesity is a predictable outcome of market economies predicated on consumption-based growth. Unlike other major causes of preventable death and disability, such as tobacco use, injuries, and infectious diseases, there are no exemplar populations in which the obesity epidemic has been reversed by public health measures. This absence increases the urgency for evidence-creating policy action, with a priority on reduction of the supply-side drivers.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Governments have largely abdicated the responsibility for addressing obesity to individuals, the private sector, and non-governmental organisations, yet the obesity epidemic will not be reversed without government leadership, regulation, and investment in programmes, monitoring, and research.

Quantification of the effect of energy imbalance on bodyweight. (K, Hall)

Vol 378; Issue 9793; pages 826-837

Topics (keywords)

Obesity (weight loss, modelling)

Summary

Obesity interventions can result in weight loss, but accurate prediction of the bodyweight time course requires properly accounting for dynamic energy imbalances. In this report, we describe a mathematical modelling approach to adult human metabolism that simulates energy expenditure adaptations during weight loss. The average increase of energy intake needed to sustain the increased weight (the maintenance energy gap) has amounted to about 0.9 MJ per day and quantifies the public health challenge to reverse the obesity epidemic

So what? Advocacy Implications

By modelling the quantitative physiology of human weight change and providing easy access to a web-based simulation tool, we believe that health-care and health-policy practitioners will be in a position to make better informed decisions

Health and economic burden of the projected obesity trends in the USA and the UK. (Y, Wang)

Vol 378; Issue 9793; pages 815-825

Topics (keywords)

Obesity (economics, cost effective strategies)

Summary

Rising prevalence of obesity is a worldwide health concern because excess weight gain within populations forecasts an increased burden from several diseases, most notably cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and cancers. In this report, we used a simulation model to project the probable health and economic consequences in the next two decades from a continued rise in obesity in two ageing populations—the USA and the UK.

So what? Advocacy Implications

A systematic understanding of the potential morbidity and cost implications of specified hypothetical changes in body-mass index trajectories, driven by policy changes or otherwise, is crucial for formation of effective and cost-effective strategies, establishment of research and funding priorities, and creation of the political will to address the obesity epidemic.

Changing the future of obesity: science, policy, and action. (S, Gortmaker)

Vol 378; Issue 9793; pages 838-847.

Topics (keywords)

Obesity (policy, framework, systems approach)

Summary

The global obesity epidemic has been escalating for four decades, yet sustained prevention efforts have barely begun. Systems science provides a framework for organising the complexity of forces driving the obesity epidemic and has important implications for policy makers. Priority actions include policies to improve the food and built environments, cross-cutting actions (such as leadership, healthy public policies, and monitoring), and much greater funding for prevention programmes. Increased investment in population obesity monitoring would improve the accuracy of forecasts and evaluations. The integration of actions within existing systems into both health and non-health sectors (trade, agriculture, transport, urban planning, and development) can greatly increase the influence and sustainability of policies. We call for a sustained worldwide effort to monitor, prevent, and control obesity.

So what? Advocacy Implications

The application of a systems approach to obesity prevention is novel but already has policy implications including: the need for multiple actions especially in non-health sectors, investments in cross-cutting support systems, policies that target the food and built environments, and additional data for forecasts and evaluation. Governments need to lead obesity prevention, but so far few have shown leadership. The food industry has been very active through various pledges, self-regulatory codes, and product reformulation, although the effect of these changes should be independently assessed.

Environmental Health Perspectives

Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons–Aromatic DNA Adducts in Cord Blood and Behavior Scores in New York City Children. (F, Perera)

Vol 119; Issue 8; pages 1176-1181

Topics (keywords)

Environment & health, child health (attention, behaviour)

Summary

Airborne polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) are widespread urban pollutants that can bind to DNA to form PAH-DNA adducts. Prenatal PAH exposure measured by personal monitoring has been linked to cognitive deficits in childhood in a prospective study conducted by the Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health. Results suggested that PAH exposure, measured by DNA adducts, may adversely affect child behavior, potentially affecting school performance

So what? Advocacy Implications

Prenatal exposure to PAHs at levels encountered in the air of New York City may adversely affect child behavior. It is possible to reduce airborne PAH concentrations through currently available pollution controls, energy efficiency, alternative energy sources and regulatory intervention to remove or control polluting sources.

Creating National Air Pollution Models for Population Exposure Assessment in Canada. (P, Hystad)

Vol 119: Issue 8; pages 1123-1129

Topics (keywords)

Environment & health (pollution, surveillance, modelling, policy)

Summary

Population exposure assessment methods that capture local-scale pollutant variability are needed for large-scale epidemiological studies and surveillance, policy, and regulatory purposes. Currently, such exposure methods are limited. The national pollutant models created in this study improve exposure assessment compared with traditional monitor-based approaches by capturing both regional and local-scale pollution variation.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Applying national models to routinely collected population location data can extend land use modelling techniques to population exposure assessment and to informing surveillance, policy, and regulation.

Case Report: High Prenatal Bisphenol A Exposure and Infant Neonatal Neurobehavior. (S, Sathyanarayana)

Vol 119: Issue 8; pages 1170-1175

Topics (keywords)

Environment & health, child health (plastic use, exposure)

Summary

Most of the U.S. population is exposed to the high-production-volume chemical bisphenol A (BPA), but targetable sources of exposure remain to be determined. Animal studies and one human study suggest that BPA is a neurotoxicant. Investigations into sources of high gestational urinary BPA concentrations provide an opportunity to identify potential targets for reduction of BPA exposure. This case highlights a potential link between gestational BPA exposure and transient neurobehavioral changes.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Health care providers should be prepared to learn about BPA and other environmental endocrine-disrupting chemicals and to appropriately counsel patients on how to minimize exposures. Industry can also help educate health care practitioners and consumers by providing information on products containing BPA and reduce exposures in manufacturing when possible.

A Review of Seafood Safety after the Deepwater Horizon Blowout. (J, Gohlke)

Vol 119: Issue 8; pages 1062-1069

Topics (keywords)

Environment & health (seafood safety)

Summary

The Deepwater Horizon (DH) blowout resulted in fisheries closings across the Gulf of Mexico. Federal agencies, in collaboration with impacted Gulf states, developed a protocol to determine when it is safe to reopen fisheries based on sensory and chemical analyses of seafood. This study recommends use of a range of plausible risk parameters to set bounds around LOCs, comparisons of post-spill measurements with baseline levels, and the development and implementation of long-term monitoring strategies for metals as well as PAHs and dispersant components.

So what? Advocacy Implications

A detailed monitoring and testing strategy that includes assessment of metals should be designed and coupled with an effective risk communication campaign to present the current results and long-term monitoring plans after the DH oil spill. A robust long-term monitoring and exposure assessment program is critical to improve our understanding of seafood safety after oil spills, which will provide invaluable information for greater preparedness in response to future oil spills.

American Journal of Preventive Medicine
H1N1 and Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Safety in the Vaccine Safety Datalink Project. (G, Lee)

Vol 41: Issue 2; pages 121-128

Topics (keywords)

Preventive health (influenza, vaccines)

Summary

The emergence of pandemic H1N1 influenza virus in early 2009 prompted the rapid licensure and use of H1N1 monovalent inactivated (MIV) and live, attenuated (LAMV) vaccines separate from seasonal trivalent inactivated (TIV) and live, attenuated (LAIV) influenza vaccines. The Vaccine Safety Datalink (VSD) Project monitors 9.2 million members in eight U.S. medical care organizations. No major safety problems following H1N1 or seasonal influenza vaccines were detected in the 2009–2010 season in weekly sequential analyses.

So what? Advocacy Implications

A robust influenza immunization program in the U.S. requires ongoing monitoring of potential adverse events associated with vaccination. Prospective safety monitoring followed by rigorous signal refinement is critical to inform decision-making by regulatory and public health agencies.

Employment and Physical Activity in the U.S. (D, Van Domelen)

Vol 41: Issue 2; pages 136-145

Topics (keywords)

Physical activity, obesity, preventive health, environment & health (employment)

Summary

This study compared how employment status (full-time, part-time, or not employed) and job type (active or sedentary) are related to daily physical activity levels in American adults. In men, full-time employment, even in sedentary occupations, is positively associated with physical activity compared to not working, and in both genders job type has a major bearing on daily activity levels.

So what? Advocacy Implications

These findings, in conjunction with recent economic trends increasingly sedentary jobs and rising unemployment highlight occupational physical activity as an important research target and support the need for special programs that help raise activity levels in the workplace.

U.S. School travel, 2009: An assessment of trends. (N, McDonald)

Vol 41: Issue2; pages 146-151

Topics (keywords)

Physical activity, environment & health, child health (travel, schools)

Summary

The National Household Travel Survey collected data on the travel patterns of 150,147 households in 2008 and 2009. There have been sharp increases in driving children to school since 1969 and corresponding decreases in walking to school. This increase is particularly evident in the number of vehicle trips generated by parents dropping children at school and teens driving themselves.

So what? Advocacy Implications

The White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity has set a goal of increasing the proportion of students walking to school by 50% by 2015. The NHTS survey can be useful in monitoring progress toward this goal and providing a comparative benchmark for local communities.

Practices associated with weight loss versus weight-loss maintenance: Results of a National survey. (C, Sciamanna)

Vol 41: Issue 2; pages 159-166

Topics (keywords)

Physical activity, nutrition, preventive health (weight loss)

Summary

Few studies have examined the weight-control practices that promote weight loss and weight-loss maintenance in the same sample. Successful weight loss and weight-loss maintenance may require two different sets of practices. In the present study, it was observed that those who used four practices (eat plenty of low-fat sources of protein, follow a consistent exercise routine, reward yourself for sticking to your diet or exercise plan, and remind yourself why you need to control your weight) more often were more likely to be successful in weight-loss maintenance but not in initial weight loss.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Practices that are associated with weight loss are different from those that are associated with weight-loss maintenance. Given the waning motivation to engage in the weight-control process over time, designing interventions that focus on encouraging different practices at different times may enable the creation of more effective weight-loss maintenance interventions.

Prevalence of smoking in movies as perceived by teenagers: Longitudinal trends and predictors. (K, Choi)

Vol 41: Issue 2; pages 167-173

Topics (keywords)

Tobacco, marketing, child health (movies, teenagers)

Summary

Smoking in movies is prevalent. However, use of content analysis to describe trends in smoking in movies has provided mixed results and has not tapped what adolescents actually perceive. This study assessed the prospective trends in the prevalence of smoking in movies as perceived by teenagers and identify predictors associated with these trends. Teenagers' perception of the prevalence of smoking in movies declined over time, which may be attributable to changes made by the movie industry. Despite the decline, teenagers were still exposed to a moderate amount of smoking imagery.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Interventions that further reduce teenage exposure to smoking in movies may be needed to have an effect on adolescent smoking

Productivity savings from colorectal cancer prevention and control strategies. (C. J, Bradley)

Vol 41: Issue 2; pages e5-e14

Topics (keywords)

Preventive health, public health expenditure (modelling, productivity costs, savings)

Summary

This study used a micro-simulation modelling study to estimate and project productivity costs of colorectal cancer (CRC) and to model the savings from four approaches to reducing CRC incidence and mortality. Using prevention and treatment strategies simultaneously, 3586 deaths could have been avoided in 2010, leading to a savings of \$1.4 billion. Cumulatively, by 2020, simultaneous strategies that reduce risk factors and increase screening and treatment could result in 101,353 deaths avoided and \$33.9 billion in savings in reduced productivity loss.

So what? Advocacy Implications

The evidence suggests that investments in strategies to reduce CRC incidence and mortality are likely to be cost-saving and the potential for savings from avoided productivity loss is substantial— even in a population of older individuals. The estimates in this study favour strategies such as screening and risk factor reduction that either reduces the number of CRC cases or alters the course of disease.

The descriptive epidemiology of sitting: A 20-Country comparison using International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ). (A, Bauman)

Vol 41: Issue 2; pages 228-235

Topics (keywords)

Physical activity, preventive health (sitting time, sedentary behaviour)

Summary

Recent epidemiologic evidence points to the health risks of prolonged sitting, that are independent of physical activity. This paper reports the prevalence of "high sitting time" and its correlates in an international study in 20 countries. Median sitting time varied widely across countries. Data were available for 49,493 adults aged 18–65 years from 20 countries. The median reported sitting time was 300 minutes/day.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Assessing sitting time is an important new area for preventive medicine, in addition to assessing physical activity and sedentary behaviours. Population surveys that monitor lifestyle behaviours should add measures of sitting time to physical activity surveillance.

Economic value of home-based, multi-trigger, multi-component intervention with an environmental focus for reducing asthma morbidity. (T. A, Nurmagambetov)

Vol 41: 2S1; pages S33-S47

Topics (keywords)

Environment & health, public health expenditure (asthma)

Summary

A recent systematic review of home-based, multi-trigger, multi-component interventions with an environmental focus showed their effectiveness in reducing asthma morbidity among children and adolescents. The purpose of

the present review was to identify economic values of these interventions and present ranges for the main economic outcomes (e.g., program costs, benefit–cost ratios, and incremental cost-effectiveness ratios). Based on cost–benefit and cost-effectiveness studies, the results of this review show that these programs provide a good value for dollars spent on the interventions.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Based on the results of included cost–benefit and cost-effectiveness studies, this systematic review concludes that home-based, multi-trigger, multi-component interventions with an environmental focus provide a good value for the dollars spent on these programs.

American Journal of Public Health

Mental Health Promotion in Public Health: Perspectives and Strategies From Positive Psychology. (R, Kobau)

Vol 101: Issue 8; e1

Topics (keywords)

Preventive health (mental health)

Summary

This article discusses positive psychology which is the study of such competencies and resources, or what is “right” about people—their positive attributes, psychological assets, and strengths. Positive psychology offers new approaches for bolstering psychological resilience and for promoting mental health, and thus may enhance efforts of health promotion generally and of mental health promotion specifically.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Mental health promotion and positive psychology offer the public (1) additional ways to describe and value the full spectrum of mental health to lessen the stigma and to initiate conversations about mental health and (2) evidence-based individual, community, and social interventions that can enhance positive mental health. Greater synergy between positive psychology and public health might help promote positive mental health in innovative ways that can improve overall population health.

Using the Tax System to Promote Physical Activity: Critical Analysis of Canadian Initiatives. (B, von Tigerstrom)

Vol 101: Issue 8; e10

Topics (keywords)

Physical activity, obesity, child health (tax incentives)

Summary

In Canada, tax incentives have been recently introduced to promote physical activity and reduce rates of obesity. The most prominent of these is the federal government’s Children’s Fitness Tax Credit, which came into effect in 2007. The authors critically assess the potential benefits and limitations of using tax measures to promote physical activity.

So what? Advocacy Implications

The estimated costs of the tax-based programs in Canada are substantial; therefore, it is important to consider whether those public funds are better spent on other strategies that could instead provide direct public funding to improve recreational facilities and active transportation networks or to enhance physical activity programs in schools.

Fortification of Corn Masa Flour With Folic Acid in the United States. (A, Fleischman)

Vol 101: Issue 8; pages 1360-1364

Topics (keywords)

Child health (folic acid, race/ethnicity)

Summary

Food fortification is an effective public health tool for addressing micro-nutrient deficiencies. The mandatory fortification of enriched cereal grains (e.g., wheat flour) with folic acid, is an example of a successful intervention that significantly reduced the rate of neural tube defects (NTDs). Despite the drop in NTD rates across all racial/ethnic groups after fortification, Hispanics continue to have the highest rates of this condition. One possible way to reduce this disparity is to fortify corn masa flour to increase the overall intake of folic acid in Hispanic women. The authors present the available evidence in favor of this approach, address possible safety issues, and outline next steps in the fortification of corn masa flour with folic acid in the United States.

So what? Advocacy Implications

There is sufficient evidence to support the proposition that the fortification of corn masa flour with folic acid in the United States can reduce the racial/ethnic disparity in folic acid status and decrease the incidence of NTDs in the Hispanic population without adversely affecting the health of the general population. The authors call upon key stakeholders, including health care professionals, food industry leaders, and consumer advocacy groups, to work together to help prevent this serious birth defect.

Encouraging Consumption of Water in School and Child Care Settings: Access, Challenges, and Strategies for Improvement. (A, Patel)

Vol 101: Issue 8; pages 1370-1379

Topics (keywords)

Child health, nutrition (drinking water)

Summary

Children and adolescents are not consuming enough water, instead opting for sugar-sweetened beverages (sodas, sports and energy drinks, milks, coffees, and fruit-flavored drinks with added sugars), 100% fruit juice, and other beverages. Because children spend most of their day at school and in child care, ensuring that safe, potable drinking water is available in these settings is a fundamental public health measure. The authors sought to identify challenges that limit access to drinking water; opportunities, including promising practices, to increase drinking water availability and consumption; and future research, policy efforts, and funding needed in this area.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Increasing drinking water access in schools is a step in the right direction toward encouraging students’ water intake. To effectively shift student preferences from sugary beverages to water, schools and child care facilities should also restrict competitive beverage sales and advertising and develop educational and promotional interventions. Schools and child care programs can address barriers through a combination of school staff, parent, and student-driven grassroots efforts; public–private partnerships; governmental policies; and funding.

Competitive Foods, Discrimination, and Participation in the National School Lunch Program. (R, Bhatia)

Vol 101: Issue 8; pages 1380-1386

Topics (keywords)

Child health, nutrition (school meals)

Summary

Meals served through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) must meet rigorous nutritional standards; however, barriers to student participation may limit the program’s health and social equity benefits.

Unsubsidized meals and food offerings competing with the NSLP offerings in school lunch environments may be lowering qualified student participation either directly or via identification of subsidized low-income students or stigmatization of the NSLP. The authors document a pilot intervention conducted in San Francisco in 2009 and 2010 that demonstrated gains in NSLP participation after removal of separate competitive a` la carte lunch meal offerings.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Although competitive foods in schools have been criticized as a nutritional hazard, their discriminatory nature and their potential effects on NSLP participation have not been widely appreciated or researched as a public health issue. Eliminating competitive a` la carte offerings may increase NSLP participation among qualified low-income students and that this effect may be mediated in part by reductions in stigma.

The Influence of Social Involvement, Neighborhood Aesthetics, and Community Garden Participation on Fruit and Vegetable Consumption. (J, Litt)

Vol 101: Issue 8; pages 1466-1473

Topics (keywords)

Nutrition (fruit and vegetable consumption)

Summary

The authors considered the relationship between an urban adult population's fruit and vegetable consumption and several selected social and psychological processes, beneficial aesthetic experiences, and garden participation. Neighbourhood aesthetics, social involvement, and community garden participation were significantly associated with fruit and vegetable intake. The qualities intrinsic to community gardens make them a unique intervention that can narrow the divide between people and the places where food is grown and increase local opportunities to eat better.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Academics, policy research, land planners, health officials, and policymakers should aim to do the following: (1) make community gardens part of the community (2) Encourage programming that connects community gardens to other nodes in the local food system (food banks, farmers' markets); (3) Consider community gardens as a primary and permanent open space option, on par with playgrounds, bike trails, and community plazas; (4) Include community gardens in land-planning processes (5) Establish zoning codes that protect gardens, (6) Consider gardens as a viable use across institutionalized properties, such as schools and affordable housing developments

The Impact of Local Environmental Health Capacity on Food-borne Illness Morbidity in Maryland. (J, Zablotsky Kufel)

Vol 101: Issue 8; pages 1495-1500

Topics (keywords)

Environment & health (food protection)

Summary

Authors evaluated the relationship between local food protection capacity and service provision in Maryland's 24 local food protection programs (FPPs) and incidence of food-borne illness at the county level. Counties with higher capacity, such as larger workforce, higher budget, and greater employee experience, had fewer food-borne illnesses. Counties with better performance and county-level regulations, such as high food service facility inspection rates and requiring certified food manager programs, respectively, had lower rates of illness.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Counties with strong local food protection capacity and services can protect the public from food-borne illness. Research on public health services can

enhance our understanding of the food protection infrastructure, and the effectiveness of food protection programs in preventing food-borne illness.

Estimating the Potential Health Impact and Costs of Implementing a Local Policy for Food Procurement to Reduce the Consumption of Sodium in the County of Los Angeles. (L, Gase)

Vol 101: Issue 8; pages 1501-1507

Topics (keywords)

Environment & health, nutrition (sodium content)

Summary

The authors examined approaches to reduce sodium content of food served in settings operated or funded by the government of the County of Los Angeles, California. Analysis predicted that if the postulated sodium-reduction strategies were implemented, adults would consume, on average, 233 fewer milligrams of sodium each day. This would correspond to 388 fewer cases of uncontrolled hypertension in the study population, and an annual decrease of \$629724 in direct health care costs.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Our findings suggest that a food-procurement policy can contribute to positive health and economic effects at the local level. Our approach may serve as an example of sodium-reduction analysis for other jurisdictions to follow.

US Housing Insecurity and the Health of Very Young Children. (D, Becker Cutts)

Vol 101: Issue 8; pages 1508-1514

Topics (keywords)

Child health, environment & health (housing insecurity)

Summary

This study investigated the association between housing insecurity and the health of very young children. Crowding was associated with household food insecurity compared with the securely housed, as were multiple moves. Crowding was also associated with child food insecurity. Multiple moves were associated with fair or poor child health, developmental risk and lower weight-for-age z scores.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Policies that decrease housing insecurity can promote the health of young children and should be a priority. Protecting families with young children from being economically forced into crowded conditions and frequent moves should be a policy priority.

A Qualitative Assessment of Beliefs, Attitudes, and Behaviors Related to Diarrhea and Water Filtration in Rural Kenya. (T, De Ver Dye)

Vol 101: Issue 8; pages 151-1520

Topics (keywords)

Environment & health (water, filtration, Kenya)

Summary

We qualitatively assessed beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors related to diarrhea and water filtration in rural Kenya. Results showed that participants held generally correct perceptions of diarrhea causation. Participants provided positive reports of their experiences with using filters and of their success with obtaining clean water, reducing disease, and reducing consumption of resources otherwise needed to produce clean water. Several participants offered technical suggestions for device improvements,

and most participants were still using the devices at the time of the assessment.

So what? Advocacy Implications

The favorable reaction to these novel devices for improving consumption of safe, filtered water provides evidence that households and individuals may find these strategies acceptable and sustainable.

Other articles of Interest

Preventing Chronic Disease

Ethical Concerns Regarding Interventions to Prevent and Control Childhood Obesity. (J, Govea)

Vol 81: Issue 5; A91

Topics (keywords)

Child health, obesity, (policy)

Summary

This article highlights ideas generated and conclusions reached at the Symposium on Ethical Issues in Interventions for Childhood Obesity, sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. A goal of the foundation is to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015 by improving access to affordable, healthful foods and safe places for children to walk, bike, and play in communities across the nation, especially those that are most affected by the epidemic and have the fewest resources. With help from our partners in the field, we developed 6 policy priorities to help maximize our impact. Each priority is grounded in scientific research and is likely to affect obesity prevalence.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Six priorities are: (1) Ensuring that all foods and beverages served and sold in schools meet or exceed the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans; (2) Increasing access to affordable foods through new or improved grocery stores and corner stores and bodegas that sell more healthful foods; (3) Increasing the time, intensity, and duration of children's physical activity, during the school day and out-of-school programs; (4) Increasing children's physical activity by improving the built environment in communities; (5) Using pricing strategies to promote the purchase of more healthful foods and (6) Reducing youth exposure to marketing of unhealthy foods through regulation, policy, and effective industry self-regulation.

Protecting Children From Harmful Food Marketing: Options for Local Government to Make a Difference. (J, Harris)

Vol 81: Issue 5; A92

Topics (keywords)

Child health, obesity, nutrition (policy)

Summary

The obesity epidemic cannot be reversed without substantial improvements in the food marketing environment that surrounds children. Increasing scientific evidence reveals potentially profound effects of food marketing on children's lifelong eating behaviors and health. Given the harmful effect of this marketing environment on children's health and the industry's reluctance to make necessary changes to its food marketing practices, government at all levels has an obligation to act. This article focuses on policy options for municipalities that are seeking ways to limit harmful food marketing at the community level.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Articles lists potentially viable local policy options to restrict the marketing of obesogenic food to children. Examples include; Impose excise taxes or fees on sugar-sweetened beverages, require healthy checkout aisles, set nutrition standards for children's meals that include a toy or other incentive item; prohibit new fast-food restaurants from opening near schools; ban the

sale of obesogenic food and beverages on school property; Prohibit fundraisers that entail selling obesogenic food and beverages.

Children With Special Health Care Needs: Acknowledging the Dilemma of Difference in Policy Responses to Obesity. (P, Minihan)

Vol 81: Issue 5; A95

Topics (keywords)

Child health, obesity (policy, race/ethnicity, special care needs)

Summary

Children with special health care needs (SHCN) account for part of the increasing prevalence of childhood obesity in the general population and can face an elevated risk for obesity. This article discusses the ethics of child obesity policy from the perspective of children with SHCN and their families. Their goal was to identify the issues that are most pertinent to efforts to optimize benefits of child obesity policy for children with SHCN. The authors describe the profile of these children and review what is known about the prevalence of overweight, obesity, and associated risk factors to inform the policy discussion.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Policy makers should be aware of the growing racial/ethnic and linguistic diversity of the US population and the particular needs and concerns of families of children with SHCN from minority and low-income communities. Policy solutions designed to address the needs of all children, including children with SHCN, are required to create healthy environments for children and to ensure that all children have a healthy life.

Associations of American Indian Children's Screen-Time Behavior With Parental Television Behavior, Parental Perceptions of Children's Screen Time, and Media-Related Resources in the Home. (D, Barr-Anderson)

Vol 81: Issue 5; A105

Topics (keywords)

Child health, obesity (parents, screen time)

Summary

Prevalence rates of overweight and obesity are high among all Americans, disproportionately so among American Indians. Young children's screen-time behavior is strongly influenced by their environment and their parents' behavior. This study explored whether parental television watching time, parental perceptions of children's screen time, and media-related resources in the home are related to screen time (i.e. television, DVD/video, video game, and computer use) among youth.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Positive parental involvement and role modeling are necessary for reducing and preventing overweight and obesity at a young age. Parents need to lead by example and teach their children healthy lifestyle behaviors. Changes in parental television watching time, parental influence over children's screen-time behavior, and availability of media-related resources in the home could decrease screen time and may be used as a strategy for reducing overweight and obesity in American Indian children.

An Observational Study of Physical Activity in Parks in Asian and Pacific Islander Communities in Urban Honolulu, Hawaii, 2009. (J, Chung-Do)

Vol 81: Issue 5; A105

Topics (keywords)

Physical activity, environment & health, child health (parks, Hawaii)

Summary

Research on park use among Asians and Pacific Islanders is limited. This study examined use and conditions of 6 urban parks, varying in size, location, and neighborhood income level, in predominantly Asian and Pacific Islander communities in Honolulu, Hawaii. Although park users in low-income neighborhoods were more active than users in high-income neighborhoods, fewer people used the low-income parks. Most parks were accessible and usable but few provided equipment and supervision. Organized activities were rarely observed.

So what? Advocacy Implications

More efforts should be made to promote parks as a physical activity resource in Asian and Pacific Islander communities, particularly for women, girls, and low-income residents. Knowing the factors that affect park usage can allow planners to create parks that prevent and reduce obesity and related conditions.

Vigorous Physical Activity Among Tweens, VERB Summer Scorecard Program, Lexington, Kentucky, 2004-2007. (M, Alfonso).

Vol 81: Issue 5; A104

Topics (keywords)

Physical activity, child health (community based programs, interventions)

Summary

Empirical examinations of the efficacy of community-based programs to increase and sustain physical activity among youth are lacking. This study describes changes in vigorous physical activity among children aged 9 to 13 years (tweens) in Lexington, Kentucky, following introduction of the VERB Summer Scorecard (VSS) intervention. Results showed that the proportion of youth who reported frequent vigorous physical activity increased from 32% in 2004 to 42% in 2007. The proportion of VSS participants with moderate or high levels of vigorous physical activity increased by approximately 17 percentage points, more than twice the proportion of non-participants.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Interventions such as VSS may empower communities to take action to encourage greater physical activity among youth. Community-based programs can support and augment school-based prevention programs. School health experts should endeavour to broaden the effect of PA messages and provide continuity with the VSS strategy that PA is fun and not merely an approach to prevent obesity or its risk factors

Strategies Implemented by 20 Local Tobacco Control Agencies to Promote Smoke-Free Recreation Areas, California, 2004-2007. (T, Satterlund).

Vol 81: Issue 5; A111

Topics (keywords)

Tobacco (smoke-free policies)

Summary

Since 2000, local jurisdictions in California have enacted hundreds of policies and ordinances in an effort to protect their citizens from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke. This study evaluated strategies used by state-funded local tobacco control programs to enact local smoke-free policies involving outdoor recreational spaces. Analysis found the following 6 strategies to be the most effective: 1) having a "champion" who helps to carry an objective forward, 2) tapping into a pool of potential youth volunteers, 3) collecting and using local data as a persuasive tool, 4) educating the community in smoke-free policy efforts, 5) working strategically in the local political climate, and 6) framing the policy appropriately.

So what? Advocacy Implications

These strategies proved effective regardless of whether policies were voluntary, administrative, or legislative. Successful policy enactment required a strong foundation of agency funding and an experienced and committed staff. These results should be relevant to other tobacco control organizations that are attempting to secure local smoke-free policy.

International Journal of Obesity

Cost-effectiveness of diet and exercise interventions to reduce overweight and obesity. (M Forster)

Vol 35: Issue 8; pages 1071-1078

Topics (keywords)

Obesity (weight-loss, interventions)

Summary

The aim of this study was to analyse whether two dietary weight loss interventions, the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) program and a low-fat diet program would be cost-effective in Australia, and to assess their potential to reduce the disease burden related to excess body weight. Results demonstrated that neither intervention reduced the body weight-related disease burden at population level by more than 0.1%. Diet and exercise interventions to reduce obesity are potentially cost-effective but have a negligible impact on the total body weight-related disease burden.

So what? Advocacy Implications

The overall effect of these interventions on the obesity-related burden of disease is negligible. Population-targeted interventions (e.g. taxes and restrictions of advertising and sales) have the greatest impact on population health. Similar approaches may be required to turn the 'obesity epidemic' around.

British Medical Journal

The health risks and benefits of cycling in urban environments compared with car use: health impact assessment study. (D, Rojas-Rueda)

Vol 343: Issue 7819

Topics (keywords)

Environment & health, physical activity (bicycle sharing, Spain)

Summary

To estimate the risks and benefits to health of travel by bicycle, using a bicycle sharing scheme, compared with travel by car in an urban environment. This study was conducted in Bicing Barcelona Spain. Public bicycle sharing initiatives have greater benefits than risks to health and reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Low cost public bicycle sharing systems aimed at encouraging commuters to cycle are worth implementing in other cities, not only for the health benefits but also for potential co-benefits such as a reduction in air pollution and greenhouse gases.

Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport**Physical activity and screen time behaviour in metropolitan, regional and rural adolescents: A cross-sectional study of Australians aged 9–16 years. (J, Dollman)**

Online edition

Topics (keywords)

Physical activity, child health (Australia, geographical differences)

Summary

While there is consistent evidence that rural adults in Australia are less active than their urban counterparts, studies relating geographical remoteness to activity patterns in Australian adolescents have yielded inconsistent results. The aim of this study was to describe objectively and subjectively measured patterns of physical activity and sedentary behaviours across remoteness categories in a representative sample of 9–16 year old Australians. While there were no differences in time spent in sport or active transport, differences in free play participation were significant. Activity levels among Australian adolescents show contrasting patterns of geographical differences to those found in Australian adults.

So what? Advocacy Implications

Physical activity among adolescents appears to be more restricted in metropolitan compared with non-metropolitan areas. Organised sport participation is independent of where adolescents live and should be vigorously promoted as a regular source of physical activity. Metropolitan male adolescents are particularly vulnerable to high sedentary time and should be targeted for reduction in leisure-time screen use.