Heavy Burden of Obesity: the Economics of Prevention

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THE HEAVY BURDEN OF OBESITY
THE ECONOMIC OF PREVENTION

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Almost two in three persons living in the United Kingdom have overweight. Nearly one in three has obesity.
Unhealthy Diets and Lack of Physical Activity Underpin the Rise in Overweight in the UK

70% of people have an unhealthy diet (measured against national guidelines)

3 in 4 Individuals do not consume a sufficient amount of fruit and vegetables

1 in 3 individuals does not do a sufficient amount of physical activity

28% of people spend more than 7 hrs/day in sedentary activities (e.g. sitting)

Source: OECD analyses on National Health Surveys and National Time Use surveys
Obesity Carries a Significant Economic Burden For The UK And Other OECD, EU28 and G20 Countries

Percentage of healthcare expenditure spent on overweight and related conditions:

- USA: 9.5%
- DEU: 8.4%
- SWE: 8.4%
- ESP: 8.4%
- AUS: 6.9%
- ITA: 6.3%
- CAN: 6.1%
- POL: 6.0%
- FRA: 6.0%
- GBR: 8.4%
- OECD average: 8.4%

Reduction in GDP due to overweight and related conditions:

- USA: 3.4%
- DEU: 3.3%
- CAN: 3.1%
- ESP: 3.1%
- AUS: 2.4%
- ITA: 2.1%
- CAN: 2.1%
- POL: 1.6%
- FRA: 1.5%
- GBR: 3.4%
- OECD average: 3.3%

Note: All figures are annual average over 2020-2050; source: OECD SPHeP NCD model
Overweight And Its Associated NCDs Carry Significant Personal Costs

Boys with obesity are less likely to have completed higher education at age 29 by 58%.

650 GBP/capita

Reduced labour force productivity due to unemployment, sick leaves, early retirement and reduced productivity because of overweight.
OECD Countries Have a Comprehensive Set of Policies to Tackle Obesity, But Gaps Remain

- Policies are too often implemented in forms that are not the most effective.
- Limited resources or practical problems limit the number of individuals that would potentially benefit from the policy.
- The environment is still too much obesogenic and conducive to unhealthy lifestyles.
### Public Health Actions to Promote a Healthy Lifestyle

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### Public Health Actions to Promote a Healthy Lifestyle

#### Health education and health promotion
- Food labelling schemes
- Menu labelling schemes
- Mass media campaigns
- Prescription of physical activity by primary care doctors
- Mobile apps to promote healthier lifestyles

#### Environmental changes
- Promotion of physical activity in schools
- Workplace wellness programmes
- Workplace sedentary behaviour programmes
- Increase in access to active public transport
- Food reformulation

#### Regulation
- Regulation of advertising of unhealthy food to children

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**Communication package**
- **Mixed package**
- **Physical activity package**
Tackling Obesity Keeps Healthy, Decreases Healthcare Expenditure and Increases Labour Force Productivity

Note: all figures are annual average over 2020-2050, total for 36 countries.
Source: OECD SPHeP NCD model
Preventing Overweight Is a Good Investment for OECD Countries

Return on investment
USD returned in GDP for every 1 USD invested in the intervention

Note: Annual weighted average over 2020-2050, total for 31 countries.
Source: OECD SPHeP NCD model & OECD ECO long term forecast model
In the UK, a 20% reduction in calorie content in high calorie food has a significant effect:

- **19,500** cases of NCDs avoided per year, including 12,500 CVDs
- **211 Mil** GBP saved every year due to reduced healthcare expenditure
- **25,000** additional full-time workers per year due to increased productivity
- **0.15%** increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Note: annual average over 2020-2050
Source: OECD SPHeP NCD model & OECD ECO long term forecast model
Overweight keeps increasing due to unhealthy diet, lack of physical activity and sedentary behaviours

Overweight has enormous (and rising) negative health, economic and social effects on the society and on single individuals

Much has been done but even more needs to be done: we need to strengthen policies currently in place and close policy gaps in certain areas

Policy packages to promote a healthier diet and an active lifestyle, particularly those modifying the environment, are an excellent investment; reformulation may play a significant role
The Heavy Burden of Obesity – The Economics of Prevention is Out!

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Data, country notes and much more at:
oe.cd/obesity2019

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