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Physical Activity in Preventing Childhood Obesity

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Editorial

Urbanization, technology progress and globalization have often resulted in important changes in people nutrition habits and life style. In a common daily diet an important percentage of energy comes from industrial processed food, associated with an increased consumption of sugar, fats, and salt. Our active life and leisure time is increasingly related with intensive technology use. Millions of us have already cultivated strangely intimate relationship with our smart phones. Take them away and the inability to remember or access any information in seconds illustrates our cognitive limitation and technology addiction.

Millennial generation, the first generation of "digital natives" born roughly between 1980 and 2000 are now reaching a stage in their lives where they have children. The childhood obesity in US has more than tripled since 1980 and most overweight children would likely become overweight and obese adults. The convergence of these two data results in the conclusion that the Net or Y Generation potential parents are already overweight and obese in a percentage three times higher than their parents. Moreover reality shows that just in US 22% of the young people in their 20's reported that they had not worked at all in the prior year, 50% of them live with their parents and neither are getting married (The Economist, 2017). As the young people working hours dropped in 2000s, hours spent in leisure activities rose nearly one-to-one. Of the rise of leisure time, 75% was accounted for by video games. It looks like an important share of young adults is delaying employment or cutting back hours in order to spend more time with video games or other screen activities [1].

Both obesity and physical inactivity are global health problems responsible for the risk increment of non-communicable diseases. Obese individuals usually cannot perform the recommended level of physical activity because of their low physical fitness and co-morbidities (diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, osteoarthritis, binge-eating disorder and depression, risk of impaired psychosocial and physical functioning) causing a negative impact on their quality of life.

The new parents' generation seems to have a preference for escaping from reality while rising children implies time, energy,

focused attention, and problem solutions in real time. Also parental style influences children self-regulation in calories intake. Regardless their parents' preferences and issues children need to be engaged in various forms of physical activities throughout the day aiming to enhance daily energy expenditure, assure a harmonious development and improve their health. Theoretically, all forms of PA can affect energy balance, and engagement in sufficient amounts of PA may positively impact body weight and health. PA potentially contribute to improvements in body weight regulation and weight loss and therefore should be included in public health policies aiming the prevention and treatment of overweight and obesity in children and their parents as well.

The role of parenting in physical activities promotion targeting children weight management was debated lately in Journal of Childhood Obesity [2,3] presenting arguments in favor of family education and involvement. A meeting point between technology fascination and physical activities necessity was found by designing digital application to promote physical activity and health eating among young population [4]. All information that digital health will bring in every day practice need to be addressed to an educated public, therefore the education and health systems part is to explain the risks on a sedentary lifestyle and the choices for lifelong health and well-being.

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