

# Childhood Obesity and Nutrition & Diabetes and Obesity

## Quality improvement project: Together against childhood obesity

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**Background:** The prevalence of obesity in children with autism is almost as high as general population. Obesity and its complications poses significant threats to independent living, self-care, quality of life, and long-term health outcomes for children with autism. Whilst appreciating the multifactorial nature of childhood obesity, we reviewed the rate of obesity in children with autism and their management planning in the community paediatric department in a district general hospital in Wales and designed a quality improvement project to improve the service.

**Aim:** Improve the understanding among medical professionals in early detection and efficient intervention to prevent obesity in children with autism.

**Method:** Baseline data collection revealed that amongst local children with autism, the rate of obesity/overweight was 20.5%. Focussed history taking including documentation of BMI, co-morbidities and management planning were identified as areas of improvement. And also there were limited understanding about the available local resources and the referral pathway for high risk cases. The quality Improvement project was implemented over a period of six months. A multifaceted approach to improvement was carried out. This included the designing of a history taking proforma, display of posters highlighting local resources and teaching for all clinical staff.

**Outcome:** The outcome was measured by a repeat retrospective notes review. There was significant improvement in recording of BMI in children with autism, identification of high risk cases and co morbidities. There was also marked improvement in focused history taking and management planning for children with obesity. The outcome will be measured in regular interval to ensure sustainability.

**Conclusion:** Obesity in children with autism is multifactorial and require unique approach. Our quality improvement project has enabled medical staff to have a clear understanding of the prevalence of obesity amongst local children with autism and also made them aware of the available local resources which is evidenced by the improvement in focused history taking and management planning. Our next step would be multidisciplinary working and innovative approaches to involve patient and family members. We have researched how we can all work together to reduce obesity in children with autism and would like to share our model of change.