Discussion 1. Effective messaging should be inclusive, collaborative and non-judgemental, promoting co-participation in the development of messages used in public national campaigns. 2. Higher rates of obesity are observed in socioeconomically deprived groups who rely on food assistance programmes, in which nutritional quality could be improved through involvement of nutrition professionals. In order to influence behaviour, basic food literacy and financial management skills could be developed, while subsidies for healthier alternatives may complement taxes on less healthy foods. 3. Advocating for better education on food science and nutrition from early learning sectors will promote increased awareness early in life. This could be augmented by reassertment of initiatives like the healthy start programme. 4. Human health is multidimensional, therefore focusing on a single metric risks oversimplifying this complexity and undervaluing the importance of healthy behaviours, even those not directly associated with weight. Instead, we should consider positive lifestyle habits, rather than a narrow focus on weight or BMI alone for the individual, informed by existing and accepted scientific findings.

Conclusion An integrated systems approach ought to be developed with a multipronged intervention strategy, targeting food production, supply and environments as well as marketing to improve availability of as well as accessibility to more nutrient-rich but less energy-dense foods. These combined with appropriate food education for consumers would enable more consistently healthy food choices.

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REFERENCES

16 EFFECTIVENESS OF A HEALTH PROMOTION STAND AT A UK UNIVERSITY TO RAISE AWARENESS ON OBESITY-RELATED WEIGHT BIAS AND STIGMA: A PILOT STUDY

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Introduction Weight bias leads to the stigmatisation of individuals with obesity and has been associated with exacerbating psychological and physiological stress as well as further weight gain. As such, there is a need for interventions to effectively address weight bias and stigma-reduction.

Aim The aim of this observational study was to evaluate the understanding of obesity-related weight bias and stigma amongst university students and staff.

Method A health promotion stand was set up in Ulster University on World Obesity Day 2020. Students and staff who engaged were presented with definitions of weight and stigma, associated consequences and the importance of person-first-language. Subsequently they were asked to translate the new knowledge into practical suggestions or advice to help combat weight bias/stigma. They were also given the option to sign a pledge to ameliorate weight bias/stigma.