



Study to determine how general practice professionals can tackle adolescent obesity

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March 13, 2007, The study which the University has announced during Obesity Awareness Week, and will be conducted over a three-year period, will survey GPs and practice nurses working in general practices in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire regarding their current practice towards adolescents who are obese.

It will look at their attitudes towards and potential barriers to giving weight management advice to young people and their awareness of and opinions on existing guidelines.

Ms Josefine Magnusson at the University's Centre for Primary and Community Care (CRIPACC) said: "A search of the existing literature found no UK-based studies on how this issue is managed in general practice. Much of the research on obesity and overweight young people has focused on younger children rather than adolescents and few studies have been done in the UK."

The study will go on to interview a sub-sample of the health professionals surveyed in order to gain a more in-depth perspective of the weight management services they offer to young people.

During the later stages of the study, adolescents (aged 13-16) who are obese will be interviewed about their experiences with such services and the associated potential barriers and facilitators. The parents of those adolescents will also be interviewed on their experiences of, and/or attitudes towards, general practice as a setting for weight management advice for young people.

Ms Magnusson commented: "The outcomes of this research will illuminate what current practice of dealing with obese adolescents in general practice is; what the potential barriers for implementing general practice-based interventions might be, and a health professional and young person's perspective on how these services can best be utilised. It is unlikely that any general practice-based interventions aimed at helping obese adolescents to lose weight will be successful before these points are fully investigated."

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