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Subscribe to the CO-OPS e-newsletter:



The CO-OPS newsletter provides an update on CO-OPS activities, new resources that we have to offer, case studies and updates from current and upcoming obesity prevention initiatives throughout Australia.

Please visit our website www.co-ops.net.au to register your details. Registering on the website gives you access to all of our resources and online forums.

CO-OPS is a free network for anyone working within the physical activity and/or nutrition sector; including health promotion, community health and public health staff; GPs, dietitians, nurses, teachers, physical activity practitioners, government staff and others working or interested in the area of physical activity, nutrition and the promotion of healthy weight in communities.

News from the CO-OPS front desk...

Welcome to the third edition of the CO-OPS newsletter. It has been another busy couple of months for the CO-OPS Secretariat. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who responded to our introductory email and invitation to join the CO-OPS network. We have had a great response and our network is rapidly growing. For those of you who have passed on our newsletter to your contacts, we appreciate your support in enabling us to expand the CO-OPS network even further.

Secretariat update: During the month of May our Knowledge Broker and Program Evaluator travelled interstate to exhibit CO-OPS at three national conferences; The National Heart Foundation Conference in Brisbane, Australian Health Promotion Association Conference in Perth and the Dietitians Association of Australia Conference in Darwin. In conjunction with the conferences they also hosted a half day workshop in each of these states. The workshops were well attended by key stakeholders and project workers. Participants gained an insight into the CO-OPS Collaboration, were introduced to our new resource, 'The Best Practice Principles for Community-based Obesity Prevention' and received a professional development session on evaluation. We had a great response to these workshops and we will be conducting additional workshops in the remaining states in the coming months. If you have any recommendations or information on events or conferences in your region or state that you think might benefit from having CO-OPS in attendance, please email Emma at: admin@co-ops.net.au.

Research in obesity prevention...

South Australia is currently 'buzzing' with news of the OPAL (Obesity Prevention and Lifestyle) project. This project is based on the successful French 'EPODE' model of community based obesity prevention. EPODE was developed after a successful trial in two towns in Northern France (Fleurbaix and Laventie). The EPODE European network has since expanded to include 206 cities in France, Belgium, Spain and Greece. The 12-year results of the Fleurbaix-Laventie study were recently published and are summarized below.

Title: Downward trends in the prevalence of childhood overweight in the setting of 12-year school and community based programmes.

Source: Public Health Nutrition

Authors: Monique Romon, Agnes Lommez, Muriel Tafflet, Arnaud Basdevant, Jean Michel Oppert, Jean Lousi Bresson, Pierre Ducimetiere, Marie Aline Charles and Jean Michel Borys.

Summary:

Two towns in France, Fleurbaix and Laventie, (FL) were the setting for a community based intervention that began in 1992. Two comparison (non-intervention) towns of a similar size, location and socio-demographic characteristics were selected for the evaluation. Initially the intervention commenced as a school based nutrition education programme that focused on children only. From 1999 however, community interest and commitment to the intervention grew and thus the intervention was expanded to address both adults and children and to involve the whole community and a range of local stakeholders. The town councils supported physical activity interventions with the provision of new sporting facilities and the employment of sport educators to support physical activity in primary schools. The interventions were supported by regular communications in local and national newspapers. The height and weight of all children aged 5-12 from FL were collected at the commencement of each school year in 1992, 2000, 2002, 2003 and 2004 (response rates >95%).

Results: The results showed that between 1992 and 2000, there was an increase in overweight and obesity prevalence, in line with national trends. Between 2000 and 2004, however, when the interventions were expanded to include the whole community, the trends in mean BMI and prevalence of overweight started to reverse and in the 2004 school year, the overweight prevalence was significantly lower in FL than it was in 2000 and significantly lower in FL than in the comparison towns. The authors conclude from these results that interventions targeting a variety of population groups can impact on a reduction in the prevalence of overweight and obesity if conducted over a long time period. South Australia hopes to replicate these results with the implementation of their OPAL project.



Best Practice Principles...

The first version of the eagerly anticipated 'Best Practice Principles', prepared by Lesley King and Tim Gill, has now been printed and published on the CO-OPS website. These principles have been developed to guide the development, delivery and evaluation of community-based obesity prevention.

The principles are divided into three sections:

- A set of principles developed from an extensive review of literature and input from Australian community based obesity prevention initiatives
- A set of guiding questions designed as a practical tool for the application of the principles
- A short version of the guiding questions designed as a quick guide for practitioners

In addition, the principles identify a range of tools and resources that will assist in their implementation.

The Best Practice Principles will continue to be open for feedback and further development. It is intended that the principles remain an evolving document, responding to changing trends, attitudes and research.

To download a copy of the Best Practice Principles please go to the CO-OPS website, <http://www.co-ops.net.au> register your details and follow the links.

Professional development ...

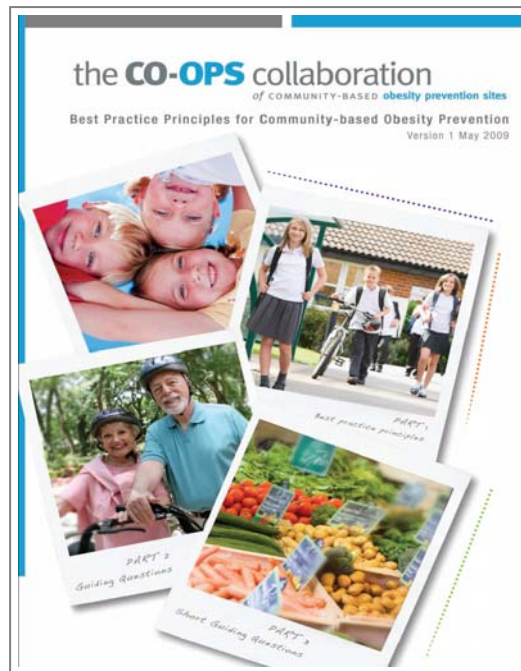
A major focus for the CO-OPS Collaboration is to coordinate a number of professional development sessions for our network contacts. Recently we sent out an email to the CO-OPS network requesting feedback on organizations and individuals' access to JAVA for online training mediums such as e-live. We have had a really positive response to this email and are working toward a timetable of sessions to forward onto the network. If you have any suggestions or requests for professional development, please let us know.

Welcome and Farewell

Next month, Associate Professor Dr Steven Allender will return to Australia to take over as Director of the CO-OPS Collaboration. We are very excited to be able to tap into his extensive international expertise into obesity prevention.

On a sad note we will say goodbye this month to our Knowledge Broker, Corinne Rice. Corinne has played an integral part in the establishment of the CO-OPS network and development of our website and we wish her all the best in her future pursuits. We are currently seeking a skilled public health practitioner to fill this role.

In the meantime Melanie Nichols will be responding to all advice and support requests. melanie.nichols@deakin.edu.au or 03 5227 8446



The CO-OPS Website

It's officially here! www.co-ops.net.au

Jump online to access a broad range of information: Currently we have:

- Information on all CO-OPS activities
- A downloadable version of the Best practice principles
- An expanding resource library of evaluation, planning and implementation tools and resources
- A networking forum
- Links to other useful obesity-prevention websites
- Archives of past newsletters and presentations

The main purpose of the website is to provide:

- Evidence based project planning, implementation and evaluation resources,
- Information on the CO-OPS collaboration
- A medium for networking and sharing of information and resources amongst workers engaged in community based obesity prevention initiatives.

Please note that access to the forum and best practice principles requires users to register and login. This will enable us to evaluate usage of the website and provide some protection against any misuse of our resources and forum.

If you would like to contribute any materials to our resource library please contact melanie.nichols@deakin.edu.au or 03 5227 8446



A focus on Tasmania...

An aim of CO-OPS is to share information on different obesity prevention initiatives throughout Australia. Each edition of the CO-OPS newsletter will highlight activities in a different state. This edition focuses on Tasmania.

Eat Well Tasmania

Eat Well Tasmania aims to raise the profile of healthy eating in Tasmania by encouraging partnerships in the promotion of healthy eating and building capacity for nutrition promotion. It assists partners to develop nutrition promotion ideas or projects: generates professional learning and network opportunities: raises the profile of initiatives; links partners with a broader nutrition network through the use of the *Eat Well Tasmania* symbol; identifies and sources funding, sponsorship and in-kind support; and provides access to promotional resources and information. *Eat Well Tasmania* members are drawn from health sector, industry, education, community organisations, researchers and local businesses. Over the last 12 months, 260 nutrition promotion projects and partnership activities were linked with *Eat Well Tasmania*.

Eat Well Tasmania co-ordinates and circulates a newsletter *Eating Matters*, has a website (www.eatwelltas.org.au) with downloadable nutrition related resources, provides media releases on nutrition initiatives, has produced a calendar to promote events, and provides fruit and vegetable costumes for community events. *Eat Well Tasmania* also takes on an advocacy role.

Eat Well Tasmania was established in 1996 and continues to play a key role in promoting healthy eating in Tasmania. Its strength is through the diversity of partners that are engaged and assisted to promote healthy eating at a local level.

Contact : Nenita Orsino (Eat Well Tasmania Executive Officer)
 Ph: (03) 6223-1244
 Email: norsino@eatwelltas.org.au

Family FoodPATCH Project

The Family Food PATCH project trains volunteer peer educators (Family food Educators) in the local community to improve the knowledge and skills of parents in relation to child and infant nutrition and physical activity. The Family Food PATCH project started in 2001 and to date 274 Family Food Educators have been trained in 25 communities across Tasmania.

Volunteers are usually parents, but may also include local community/health workers who work with families or children such as teacher aides, family day care workers, child health nurses and community house coordinators.

Are you looking for project advice and support?

CO-OPS is available to offer guidance and support and is able to assist you with any queries relating to project planning, evaluation, data collection, management and resources. If we don't know the answer, we'll endeavour to find it or put you in contact with someone who does. We have the ability to connect you to many other individuals working on community based obesity prevention initiatives and have access to a wide variety of resources. For advice and support services please contact:

Melanie Nichols (Program Evaluator)
melanie.nichols@deakin.edu.au or
03 5227 8446

The project makes the course accessible to disadvantaged groups by providing free childcare and are run in venues in disadvantaged or rural areas. Family Food Educators (FFE) undertake a short training course (25 hours) over 5 days in nutrition and physical activity for children, as well as communication skills and community action. Once training is completed, educators are supported and encouraged to promote good nutrition and physical activity to other parents, relatives and groups in their local community. Educators have access to a range of supportive resource material, as well as ongoing assistance from the project officer and the Dietitian in their local area.

The Family Food PATCH project trains and motivates peer educators to use a variety of approaches (both formal and informal) to support behaviour change in individuals and communities. Parents not only acquire improved nutritional knowledge and skills through the project but peer educators provide role models thus contributing to the "normalization" of healthy behaviours. In 2007 a state-wide evaluation showed the positive impact on educators, their families and the local community. The evaluation found that becoming a trained educator significantly increased these volunteers' knowledge, skills, confidence and behaviours around nutrition and physical activity for children, and greatly benefited the schools, playgroups, workplaces, community organisations, and many others in communities across the state.

Contact: Michelle Fletcher (Project Officer)
 Ph. (03) 6224 9198
 Email: familyfoodpatch@iprimus.com.au



A focus on Tasmania... Cont

Move Well Eat Well

Move Well Eat Well is a state-wide initiative funded by the Australian Better Health Initiative (ABHI): a joint Australian, State and Territory governments' initiative, and managed by Departments of Health and Human Services, and Education.

Move Well Eat Well is working to support the creation of environments where children can enjoy healthy eating and physical activity every day. The initiative offers an Award Program to all schools with a primary enrolment. Through *Move Well Eat Well* membership, schools are provided with recognition, support and a simple guide to create healthier environments for children. Schools that meet key criteria are recognised as Award Schools. The model is based on the Victorian Kids-'Go for your life' program, and has been adapted for the Tasmanian context.

Features include:

- Creation of a Community Support Network facilitating links between local health and community workers and schools
- Development of resources explicitly linked to Tasmania, both in terms of the Tasmanian Health and wellbeing syllabus, and in relation to community-based programs, resources and services that promote healthy eating and physical activity
- A new website with access points for schools, families and community workers. The site provides a comprehensive range of downloadable resources to support the promotion of key health messages to wider school community
- Development of clear program logic to underpin the project's evaluation methodology.

During the 2008 adaption phase, support resources were reviewed by stakeholders in the education and health/community sectors. This resulted in the production of new high quality, Tasmanian-focussed materials, the consolidation of links between services, and a shared understanding of the project's scope and intended outcomes. In late 2008, seventy three primary schools (32%) applied for membership, to commence work in 2009. Orientation sessions have since been facilitated regionally for school and health/community representatives.

The simplicity and logic of the *Move Well Eat Well* framework has inspired the development of a number of new and related projects. These include a renewed focus on active transport options for schools in a non government sector project, local government facilitation of community based events and a project designed to build capacity in disadvantaged schools.

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