

Designing an evidence-based public health campaign for children and young adults - a multidisciplinary project between School of Pharmacy and Chemistry, School of Life Sciences and School of Computing and Information Systems

The rapidly increasing burden of chronic diseases is a key determinant of global public health. 15 million people live with at least one chronic condition in the UK. Many long term conditions such as diabetes and cancer have a dietary and life style association that determines individuals' susceptibility. In order to address this, the Government has developed programs such as Change for Life and Health Check to change lifestyle behaviours and prevent disease. However, most public health initiatives are targeted at adults. Recent research has shown that weight/growth and diet at a young age even during infancy can influence susceptibility to disease and modify genetic risk. Hence, there is need for public health campaigns to target young adults and children to change behaviour and attitudes towards diet, exercise, etc. This research will aim to provide evidence for the association of lifestyle at young age to disease susceptibility and occurrence. Furthermore, it aims to survey primary school/secondary school teachers and children to identify the best educational tool to implement to improve healthy behaviour and diet in that age group taking into consideration deprivation and other social factors. The project will produce a prototype educational tool as determined by survey data and pilot and evaluate it in local schools. This is will be a community project within South London to determine a future strategy for a preventative public health at young age to combat the ever increasing rate of chronic conditions and its increasing costs on the NHS. The project is best suited for a pharmacy or other healthcare professional graduate or social science/education graduate.

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