

What is proposed to overweight and obese youth in a sample of fitness centres?

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Purpose

Overweight and obesity take a growing place in the public health preoccupations as the proportion of people over the normal BMI limit increases dramatically year after year. This evolution could have devastating consequences on the economy for years and possibly generations to come. Youth physical activity is pointed out as a priority. Fitness centres are possible partners of health services. This study aimed to know if overweight/obese youth could be welcomed into a sample of fitness centres.

Methods

A sample of 13 fitness centres of the Liege area was visited. Fourteen interviews with the managers have been conducted. Specific questions were asked about what is proposed to overweight and obese people and specifically to youth group. Content analysis has been done from verbatim transcripts.

Results

Most of the subjects consider that overweight/obese youth could encounter some difficulties to adhere to a fitness centre. Unfounded embarrassment about the look of others is underlined by 7 out of the managers. The real intrinsic motivation of the youth would be a key factor as well as real difficulties to use the equipment. Few fitness centres currently propose specific activities but 7 would be ready to collaborate with a medical unit in order to propose specific activities. Two decided to stop such initiatives according to the cost and lack of perseverance of the youth.

Conclusions

This study showed that fitness centres managers would be interested to implement initiatives to offer specific services to overweight/obese youth but it would require collaboration with health services.

Keywords

Physical activity; overweight youth; obese youth; fitness centre.

References

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