



Obesity – a test case

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Obesity – a test case

- ♦ extent of problem – increasing prevalence
- ♦ regulatory options?
 - food regulations
 - government
 - professionals
 - industry



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OBESITY CRISIS

“As we look to the future and where childhood obesity will be in 20 years...it is every bit as threatening to us as the terrorist threat we face today. It is the threat from within.”



The cover of "The Economist", Dec. 13-19, 2003.

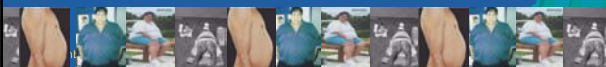
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US Surgeon General Richard Carmona
TIME/ABC Obesity Summit
June 2004

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Obesity – extent of the problem

- ♦ The world is growing fatter
- ♦ World Health Organization estimates that 1.3 billion people globally are overweight or obese
- ♦ Australia 63.7% adult men and 47% adult women are overweight or obese



Obesity – extent of the problem

Australia:

- direct medical costs estimated as 4-5% of total health care costs
- \$810m per year + \$500m on weight control programs (3)

USA:

- \$98-129 billion (4)

3. Queensland Health Information circular 58, August 2001
4. Koplan, Liverman, Kraak, 2004, Preventing childhood obesity. Health in the Balance. National Academy of Sciences.



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Obesity – food regulation opportunities

Food Standards in Australia & New Zealand

- ♦ **nutrition information panels** – 7 core areas, including total energy
 - allergen labelling – WHO list of allergens
- ♦ **health claims** on packaged foods
 - under development; low energy declarations already permitted
- ♦ **fortification of foods**
 - mandatory
 - ♦ thiamin in bread-making flour;
 - ♦ folic acid & iodine under consideration
 - voluntary - with vitamins and minerals



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Obesity – food regulation opportunities

Food standards in Australia & New Zealand – *not currently considered*

- ♦ **Warning statements** about
 - total energy content
 - poor nutrient quality
- ♦ **Mandatory nutrition labelling/information** of **ready-to-eat foods**, eg restaurants & take-aways
- ♦ **Mandatory percentage of daily value information** in NIP

Recently removed

- ♦ **Content prescriptions** on foods
 - necessary for public health?
 - setting specific? schools, nursing homes

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IOTF

communication – preventing obesity

W James, 2004

A quarter-pound cheeseburger, large fries, and a 580 ml soda provides

- ♦ **4,850 kJ (1,166 Cals)**
- ♦ **51 g fat**
- ♦ **95 mg cholesterol**
- ♦ **1,450 mg sodium**



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Healthy Weight 2008. Australia's future

National Obesity Taskforce, 2003

Action strategies for children and young people (aged 0-18 years)		NATIONAL STRATEGIES			
SETTINGS STRATEGIES	Child care	Support for families and community-wide education	Whole-of-community demonstration areas	Evidence and performance monitoring	Coordination and capacity building
	Schools				
	Primary care services				
	Family and community care services				
	Maternal and infant health				
	Workplaces				
	Food supply				
	Media and marketing				

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Obesity – An organising framework

Koplan, Liverman, Kraak, 2004, *Preventing childhood obesity. Health in the balance.* National Academy of Sciences (p. 415 -)

Broad food policy approach

- ♦ **Information environment:** education campaigns; product labelling; restricting harmful advertising.
- ♦ **Access and opportunity:** retail; school environment
- ♦ **Economic factors:** excise tax on products
- ♦ **Legal and regulatory environment:** **litigation**; food labelling claims; standards re product content
- ♦ **Prevention** and treatment programs
- ♦ **Social environment:** norms & expectations



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Food policy – information

- ♦ **National diet & nutrition data** – track changes in food patterns, choices, evaluate impact of strategies
 - energy consumption per capita
 - availability of desirable foods, eg fruit & vegetable
- ♦ **Linking between food production and consumption**
 - types, range & cost of foods being produced
- ♦ **Tracking changes** after key campaigns/ events



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Food policy – litigation

"from an investment point of view it [a lawsuit] does not have to be successful to constitute a threat"

Food industry

Advertising
Disclosure of nutritional information
Lack of warning of risk



Economic

Why do low income have highest rates obesity?

Schools

Duty to maintain safe and healthy environment for students

Susan L. Roberts, Drake University Agricultural Law Center

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Food policy – taxes

A 1-percent ad valorem tax would not appreciably alter consumption-and, thus, would have little effect on diet quality or health outcomes-but would generate more than \$40 million in annual tax revenues.

Released Friday, October 29, 2004

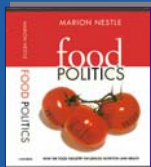
See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/aib747/aib74708.pdf>



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Food policy – professional roles

- ✓ Need to become public health **advocates** involved in policy and social change
- ✓ Need to strengthen policy and law in **education**



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Food policy – industry accountability

- ◆ Food production
- ◆ **Nutrition labelling**: clear and useful – to make informed product comparisons and decisions to achieve and maintain energy balance
- ◆ more and better **nutritional information on packaged foods** and in restaurants, as well as healthier food and drink choices
- ◆ **Advertising and marketing**: develop and strictly adhere to marketing and advertising guidelines
- ◆ Self-regulation

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Food policy – industry leadership

community-based actions - developing and promoting products, opportunities, and information that will encourage healthful eating behaviours and regular physical activity

organisational actions – employee health; canteens; support programs

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Obesity – a test case for coordinated action

- ◆ multi-disciplinary issue
- ◆ education-base behaviour change approaches and public policy are complementary
- ◆ personal responsibility and the environment need to work hand-in-hand



Dairy Council of California (Jan 04) *Preventing and treating overweight through education and tailored intervention*. info@dairycouncilofca.org.

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