

**Short Communication****Childhood obesity and its challenges****Nikunja Kishor Mishra<sup>1\*</sup>, Niharika Mishra<sup>2</sup>**<sup>1</sup>Dept. of Pharmacology, College of Pharmaceutical Sciences, (Affiliated to Odisha University of Health Sciences, Bhubaneswar), Puri, Odisha, India<sup>2</sup>Nightingale Institute of Nursing, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India**Abstract**

Childhood obesity is a growing global public health concern, marked by excessive fat accumulation that poses serious health risks in early life and adulthood. This short communication highlights the multifactorial causes of childhood obesity, including poor dietary habits, physical inactivity, genetic factors, and environmental influences. It discusses the significant health consequences such as early onset of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and psychological issues. The challenges in addressing this condition include inadequate awareness, lack of preventive healthcare strategies, and social stigmatization. Effective management demands a collaborative approach involving families, schools, healthcare providers, and policy-makers. Early intervention through lifestyle modifications, nutritional education, and supportive public health policies is essential to curb this rising epidemic and ensure healthier futures for children worldwide.

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For reprints contact: [reprint@ipinnovative.com](mailto:reprint@ipinnovative.com)**1. Introduction**

Childhood obesity has become one of the most pressing health issues of the 21st century, with its prevalence rising alarmingly across the globe. According to the World Health Organization, the number of overweight or obese children aged 5–19 years has risen dramatically from 4% in 1975 to over 18% in 2016.<sup>1</sup> Obesity during childhood not only increases the risk of developing chronic illnesses such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular diseases but also contributes to emotional and psychological distress, including low self-esteem and depression. The condition is influenced by a complex interplay of factors such as unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, genetic predisposition, and socio-environmental influences.<sup>2</sup> Despite growing awareness, addressing childhood obesity remains a major challenge due to inadequate healthcare access, lack of preventive strategies, and limited community and parental involvement. This communication explores the root causes,

associated health impacts, and necessary multi-sectoral approaches required to tackle childhood obesity effectively.

**2. Discussion**

The increasing prevalence of childhood obesity is a multifactorial problem with serious short- and long-term health implications. The major contributors include unhealthy dietary patterns—such as high intake of sugary beverages, fast food, and ultra-processed snacks—and a sedentary lifestyle characterized by reduced physical activity and increased screen time.<sup>3</sup> Genetic factors and hormonal imbalances may also play a role, but environmental and behavioral aspects remain predominant drivers.

One of the biggest challenges in tackling childhood obesity is the lack of awareness among parents and caregivers about healthy nutrition and the importance of regular physical activity. In many cases, childhood obesity is overlooked until complications such as insulin resistance, fatty liver disease, or elevated blood pressure emerge.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, stigma and

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bullying related to body image can lead to psychological distress, creating a cycle of overeating, low self-esteem, and social withdrawal.

Socioeconomic status significantly influences both the risk and management of obesity. Children from low-income families may have limited access to healthy foods, safe play areas, and healthcare services, which hampers effective prevention and intervention efforts. School environments often lack structured physical education and nutrition education programs, further contributing to poor health outcomes. To combat these issues, a multidisciplinary approach is essential. This includes early screening, parental involvement, nutritional counseling, and promotion of physical activity at school and community levels. Policy measures such as taxation on sugary drinks, front-of-pack labeling, and restrictions on junk food marketing to children have shown promise in curbing obesogenic environments.

A strong public health commitment, supported by political will and community engagement, is crucial to reverse the growing trend of childhood obesity. Without timely intervention, this epidemic may result in a generation more susceptible to chronic illnesses at younger ages, leading to a reduced quality of life and increased healthcare burden globally.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. Conclusion

Childhood obesity is a critical and complex public health issue that demands urgent attention. Its multifactorial nature—encompassing dietary habits, sedentary lifestyles, genetic predisposition, and environmental influences—makes prevention and management particularly challenging. Left unaddressed, it significantly increases the risk of chronic physical and mental health conditions, both in childhood and later life. Combating this epidemic requires a coordinated

approach involving families, schools, healthcare systems, communities, and policy-makers. Promoting early lifestyle interventions, increasing public awareness, and implementing evidence-based health policies can pave the way for healthier generations. A sustained and collaborative effort is essential to reduce the growing burden of childhood obesity and to secure a healthier future for children worldwide.

### 4. Source of Funding

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### 5. Conflict of Interest

None.

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