Childhood Obesity Amongst School-Aged Children

Obesity or overweightness can occur due to slight negligence of health which sooner or later causes harm to the people on the long run. According to the Department of Health (2020), children who are 4 years old need to be enrolled in kindergarten, which is the beginning of their school years. It starts when a child reaches 5 years and six months until the age of 17 years 6 months or when he turns 18. Hruby & Hu (2014) state, obesity can be defined as the extra weight of the body for height followed by extra fat and adiposity metabolically.25% Australian children are obese or overweighed [Backholer (2012), Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013), Monash University (2013), as cited in McHugh 2016]. This essay will include how lack of activity can cause obesity in children and how overweightness can cause hypertension and orthopedic problems in children.

The trend of sports and or any other play that includes physical participation has gone down over the past years in Australia. Lack of physical activity is one of the major reasons that causes obesity in children. It is important for a school level children to get 60 minutes of high-level physical activity in a day as stated by the Department of Health (2019) but since children these days, do not get enough activity the fat gets stored in the body, instead of being used which results in obesity. The rate of obese children has been rising by 1% annually. Around 19-24% of Australian children are overweight or obese (p.1 and 2). Dixon (2004) mentioned that there are only 56% of children in Queensland who have sufficient physical activity to gain health benefits. Approximately 40% of children fail to be involved in sports activities besides school hours (Timperio, Salmon & Ball, as cited by Dixon, 2004, p.14). There has been a collaboration between a Melbourne school (St Michael’s Grammar School) and the Outdoor Education Group (OEG) for a program that allows the students to walk through the Snowy River area for surfing. Similarly, the school also worked together with James Cook University (JCU) which lets the students learn while participating in physical activity which helps them maintain good health and prevent obesity. Likewise, Morrison (2019), a recently retired leader of the school sport unit, claimed, in his 30 years of career he has watched the popularity of sports amongst the children decrease while the rate of obesity inclined. He mentioned, only one in five children achieve the physical activity guide of 60 minutes of moderate to intense activity which has contributed to increase the number of obese children. Obesity can cause a child to have hypertension.

Obesity can have major consequences, one of them is high blood pressure. Different diagnosis has revealed that, even in pediatric age, hypertension can be related with the alterations of heart and its parts [Pieruzzi, Antolini, Salerno, Giussani, Brambilla, Galbiati, Mastriani, Rebora, Stella, Valsecchi, Genovesi, and Hypertens. (2015) as cited in Hypertension in Children: Role of Obesity, Simple Carbohydrates, and Uric Acid (2018)]. Australian children are prone to be hypertensive as the obesity rate seems to be increasing in recent years. Like Elke W€uhl (2018,p.38) said, increasing weight increases the risk of getting hypertension along with 75% of risk for primary hypertension. Furthermore, 4% children in schools of Italy had high blood pressure out of which about 37% of the students were overweight and 3% were normal weight (Orlando, Cazzaniga, Giussani, Palestini and Genovesi, 2018) which tells that obese children in Australia have high risk of being obese. Moreover, obesity can also be a reason for orthopedic problems.

It becomes difficult for a human skeleton to carry its own weight once it reaches the limit of obesity. As reported by Nahar, Kamrun, Khan, Tanveer, Hossain, and Kamal (2017) the amount of pressure exerted on the legs joint pain in obese children. People with BMI equal to or greater than 25kg/m2 have more probability of premature mortality. Meanwhile, an Australian study among 140 children concluded that flat feet and body mass were not interrelated. Other studies might have reported differently due to differences in arch height examining techniques and ethnicity of the participants. Riddiford-Harland, Steele and Baur (2011) stated, that a study in the University of Wollongong reported that obese children have fat flat feet with lower arches in comparison to healthy children. These are a few scenarios of orthopedic severities obesity can cause.

To sum up, childhood obesity is one of the major problems in this generation and lack of physical activity contributes to it. Inactivity can lead to chronic diseases like hypertension and orthopedic problem, hence, it is important for school aged children to meet the suggested time of physical activity on a daily basis.