

An Assessment of the Barriers to a Healthy Diet for Families in White City, London, during the 'Cost of Living' Crisis

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Connecting Care for Children (CC4C) is an integrated care collaborative linking paediatricians, primary care (GPs) and local communities.

We work with six General Practitioner (GP) Primary Care Networks (PCNs) across North West London. The PCNs host specialist clinics with a GP and Paediatrician and multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings.

The problem

Tackling obesity is a long-term health challenge that needs to be addressed, with rates of obesity being highest among the most deprived areas of the country.

In White City 40.7% of year 6 students are overweight, making it one of the highest areas in London and above the national average.

Aim

This small cohort study, aimed to identify the barriers to healthy eating for families in White City, in light of the 'cost of living' crisis.

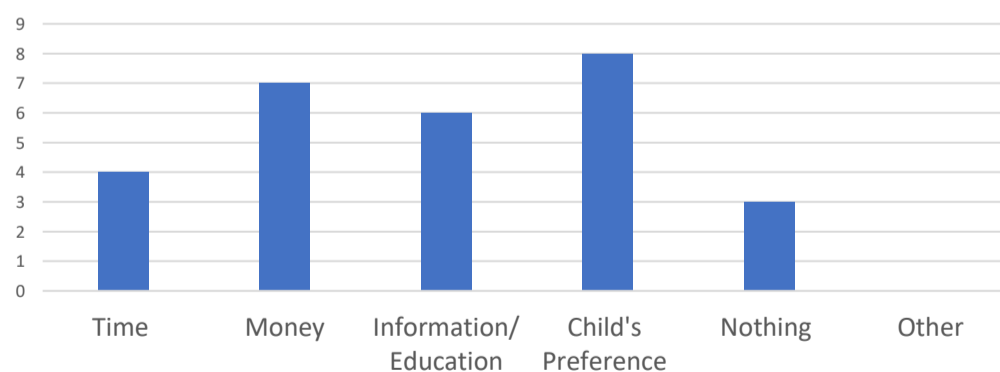
What we did

We gathered qualitative data between Sep - Dec 2022 by:

- Co-designing a survey with parents, who shared it on their community WhatsApp groups (with a total of 15 responses)
- Running semi-structured interviews with parents and young people (5 interviews were conducted)

Results

What Would you say is the biggest thing, if anything, stopping your child from having a healthy diet?



- 80% of parents responded that they have been concerned about their child's diet
- Over half of parents listed a) child's preference and b) financial constraints as the biggest barriers to their children having a healthy diet
- 60% of parents considered their child's diets to be healthy
- A third of parents were unsure about what vitamins their children needed for a healthy diet

Impact

We used QI methodology to deliver multiple interventions to this population.

One intervention was displaying the QR code for the survey (see bottom of poster) in outpatient areas. We have started putting together an information page for families using the data we collected:

'Gaining a knowledge about eating healthy and about vitamins at young age could help instil in children the awareness ...so they also begin to make active choices.'

'Healthy food is expensive. Any ideas on cheaper options without compromising on nutrition would be helpful'

'Healthy eating is a struggle, we would be happy to receive as much help and support as possible'

Conclusions

- The data highlighted parents concerns about their child's diet, with the current cost of living crisis adding significant financial pressures to families
- Other barriers, including information, education and child's preference pose significant barriers and can be applied to the wider population
- A multi-faceted approach is required to support families to provide a balanced diet

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