

## ***Planning parental on-line education about healthy-weight lifestyle in pediatric primary care patients 6-12 years in the United States: A needs assessment of parents and healthcare staff in low-income, diverse populations***

*Joshua S. Yudkin, Marlyn A. Allicock Sarah E. Barlow  
University of Texas Health Science Centre, Texas, USA*

### ***Abstract***

**Background:** Childhood obesity is a pandemic with immediate and future health risks, and with complex underpinnings that demand holistic, personalized, and innovative treatments. Healthcare providers struggle to provide such treatment within the constraints of medical visits. A theoretical and evidence-based e-health intervention, presented and endorsed by healthcare providers, could engage parents and caregivers to improve health behaviors and improve reach to low-income families with diverse backgrounds, a cohort with high risk for childhood obesity, and one often neglected in clinical research. This study aims to identify needs and preferences of potential users of an e-health intervention.

**Methods:** Focus groups and interviews of ethnically diverse, low-income parents and semi-structured interviews of primary healthcare staff obtained perspectives on the content and structure of a web-based intervention intended to improve lifestyle habits to reduce childhood obesity. Research team members coded and analyzed the data to identify specific needs and communication strategies for the target population.

**Results:** In this formative research, parents endorsed interest in learning more about healthy eating, physical activity, strategies to reduce screen time, and the effects of sugar-sweetened beverages on their child's weight. Parents reported a preference for bright colors, short texts, videos, summary quizzes, and additional resources for them to explore on their own and with their child. Healthcare practitioners reported time limitations during clinical visits and an interest in having family progress be looped into their EHR. By completing an e-health course and sharing behavioral modifications, parents expect an improved relationship and increased trust with their child's pediatrician.,

**Conclusion:** Parents and healthcare staff saw value in this tool and provided useful recommendations for its design. This e-health site has the potential to create a health alliance between the healthcare provider and family, to provide some personalized content, and yet to be scaled to address health disparities broadly.

**Key Words:** obesity, needs assessment; youth, lifestyle intervention, primary care.

### ***Biography:***

Joshua Yudkin, MA, MPH, a doctoral student in epidemiology at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Public Health in Dallas, has been selected for a Fulbright award.

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