



## MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

### **Lost opportunity: Family doctors are under-used source of help for overweight children**

GPs are not providing advice to overweight children who attend their surgeries, missing a vital opportunity to redress the obesity epidemic, according to new research presented at the General Practice & Primary Health Care Research Conference today.

Led by Dr Michelle Cretikos from the NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity, the research showed while GPs provide lifestyle advice to some overweight children, many more could benefit from their help.

The study revealed that for every 200 GP visits in children aged 2- 17 years, around 60 of the children will be overweight, while only one of those children will be managed by their GP for their weight problem.

“GPs are keenly aware that childhood overweight has potentially serious medical consequences and are strongly committed to working with parents, adolescents and children to prevent and manage weight problems,” Dr Cretikos said.

But this study shows family doctors could be doing much more to assess and manage weight problems in children, about 25% of whom are overweight or obese, she said.

“We believe that GPs have much to offer in the way of simple, practical and reliable advice for children and their parents.”

Dr Cretikos’ review of GP management of weight problems in children also found:

- Parents rarely raise concerns about their child’s weight with their GP
- Most GPs do not weigh children regularly, partly because of concern that parents and children may become upset
- GPs provide appropriate lifestyle advice and counselling on physical activity and healthy eating practices for the overweight children they do manage

The study was conducted in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare’s Australian General Practice Statistics and Classification Centre at the University of Sydney.

Further information about the General Practice and Primary Health Care Research Conference is available on the conference website, [www.phcris.org.au](http://www.phcris.org.au)

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Notes to Editors:

The conference is run in partnership with the Primary Health Care Research and Information Service (PHC RIS), the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute (APHCRI) and the Australian Association of Academic General Practice (AAAGP). The conference is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

PHC RIS works in partnership with the Divisions of General Practice Network, primary health care researchers and policy advisors to generate, manage and share information and knowledge that contributes to policy and improves performance. For more information visit our website: [www.phcris.org.au](http://www.phcris.org.au)

⇒ Keynote speakers attending the event include



- **Professor Chris van Weel (Professor and Head of Department for General practice/Family medicine, Radboud University Medical Centre, Nijmegen, The Netherlands)** APHCRI Visiting Fellow. *Professor van Weel has a strong interest in chronic disease management and is the founder of the Netherlands School of Primary Care Research. He is President-elect of WONCA.*
  - **Professor Nicky Britten (Professor of Applied Health Care Research & Deputy Director of the Institute of Clinical Education, the Peninsula Postgraduate Health Institute, UK).** *Professor Britten is a sociologist with interests in the synthesis of qualitative research and user involvement in research.*
  - **Professor Bonnie Sibbald (Deputy Director of the National Primary Care Research and Development Centre University of Manchester)** APHCRI Visiting Fellow. *Professor Sibbald is investigating how general practice teams should be configured to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of care.*
- ⇒ Other presenters attending the event include
- The Hon Tony Abbott MP
  - David Currow
  - Libby Kalucy
  - Please see the speaker profiles in your media pack for more information
- ⇒ Media registration is available to those wishing to attend the conference, contact Sarah Eckermann for details
- ⇒ A media room will be available at the event.

For more information, please contact:

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