

International Society of Environmental Epidemiology**Meeting:**

Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly (A68/1)

Agenda Item:

13.3 Update on the Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity

Statement:

Following the Update on the commission on Ending Childhood Obesity presented at the 68th World Health Assembly, ISEE, the International Society of Environmental Epidemiology, supports the reliance on a life course approach to prevention of childhood obesity.

We would like to insist on the possible impact of early life (including prenatal) exposures on the development of childhood obesity. In addition to physical activity in childhood and of dietary factors, our Society would like to draw the Commission's attention on the possible role of exposure to environmental contaminants during early life as a possible cause of childhood overweight and obesity.

Following the discovery of leptin, it is now clear that the adipose tissue is an endocrine tissue. Research in the field of endocrine disruptors has demonstrated that many exogenous compounds can interact with nuclear receptors implied in the control of growth and the development of adipose tissues, such as the oestrogen receptor. Toxicological experiments have shown that in utero exposure to specific chemicals with endocrine disrupting properties cause obesity in the offspring. In humans, there is expanding evidence indicating that overweight in childhood may be associated with early life exposure to endocrine disruptors, including Persistent Organic Pollutants (such as DDT or perfluorinated compounds) or brominated flame retardants (PBDE).

Thus, in addition to behavioural factors, member states should be aware of the existence of these so-called *environmental obesogens*. Limiting early life exposure to these environmental obesogens may be another relevant way to limit the occurrence of childhood obesity.

We therefore encourage that not only physical activity and nutritional factors, but also chemical contaminants of the food, air, water, as well as chemicals present in consumers products and cosmetics be considered as possible targets to prevent obesity in childhood.

International Society of Environmental Epidemiology**Meeting:**

Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly (A68/1)

Agenda Item:

13.4 Follow-up to the 2014 high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly to undertake a comprehensive review and assessment of the progress achieved in the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases

Statement:

ISEE, the International Society of Environmental Epidemiology, wishes to emphasize the importance of environmental factors as determinants of non-communicable diseases. Air pollution, at levels commonly observed in all parts of the world, causes lung cancers, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, and affects child development. It creates burden to health comparable with other major well-established causes of non-communicable disease. Exposure to lead, still used in various consumer products, causes intellectual disability in children and cardiovascular diseases in adults. Numerous widespread chemicals are carcinogenic, cause inflammation, oxidative stress, or affect the endocrine function.

Primary prevention of non-communicable diseases and decrease of their burden on health requires radical decrease of population exposure to these environmental risks. As recognized by the Resolution 68/300 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 July 2014 (paragraph 16), “affordable interventions to reduce environmental and occupational health risks are available and ... prioritization and implementation of such interventions in accordance with national conditions can contribute to reducing the burden of noncommunicable diseases”. Multisectorial policies and actions are necessary for the reduction of harmful exposures and creation of environments supporting to health. The health sector has an essential role in promoting those policies. Environmental epidemiologists, the members of ISEE, are looking forward to those actions and are well prepared to demonstrate their effectiveness.

International Society of Environmental Epidemiology**Meeting:**

Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly (A68/1)

Agenda Item:

14.6 - Health and the environment: addressing the health impact of air pollution

Statement:

The International Society of Environmental Epidemiology (ISEE) gathers environmental health scientists from the whole world. It strongly supports the WHO Secretariat report addressing the health impact of air pollution presented during the 68th World Health Assembly.

A voluminous body of research conducted world-wide documents the adverse effects of exposure to ambient and household air pollution, including lung cancer, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, and impaired child development. Air pollution imposes a burden to health comparable with that of other major causes of non-communicable disease, as shown by the Global Burden of Disease studies.

This burden of disease is borne disproportionately by the populations of low- and middle-income countries where the majority of the population lives in areas where air quality does not meet WHO air quality guidelines. The poorest face a double burden of disease from high levels of ambient and household air pollution from burning of solid fuels. In high-income countries, where environmental regulations have been implemented, air quality has markedly improved in recent decades, with substantial declines in estimated disease burden. However, the latest research shows that adverse health effects persist even below current WHO guidelines conferring substantial disease burdens and offering room for additional public health gains if actions are taken to further improve air quality.

We expect that the WHO support to Member States will include new updates of its Air Quality Guidelines and their promotion. Improved monitoring of population exposure to air pollutants in the Member States will increase their ability to plan and evaluate their own actions to reduce pollution.

ISEE declares its readiness to contribute to these essential tasks of WHO through research and expertise. We are looking forward to strong commitment of all countries to clean the air, expecting that this will significantly benefit human health.