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Contributors

Mulugeta Abebe BSocSc
Health Promotion Officer
Merri Community Health Services
Victoria, Australia

Rebecca Armstrong MPH, BN, BAppSci (Health Promotion) (Hon)
Senior Research Fellow
Cochrane Public Health Review Group
Jack Brockhoff Child Health and Wellbeing Program,
McCaughhey Centre
Melbourne School of Population Health
University of Melbourne
Victoria, Australia

Louise A. Baur PhD, FRACP
Professor, Discipline of Paediatrics and Child Health
University of Sydney; Director, Weight Management Services
The Children's Hospital at Westmead
Sydney, Australia

A. Colin Bell PhD
Co-joint Associate Professor
University of Newcastle
Wallsend, Australia

Jean-Michel Borys MD
EPODE's Director, Paris, France
Nutritionist, Centre Kennedy
Armentieres, France

Sue Bowker MSc
Head of Branch, Young and Older People
Health Improvement Division
Welsh Assembly Government
Cardiff, UK

Johannes Brug PhD
Director, EMGO Institute for Health and Care Research
Chair of Division VI; Head, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics
VU University Medical Center Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Goof J. Buijs MSc
Manager Schools for Health in Europe Network (SHE Network)
Netherlands Institute for Health Promotion NIGZ
Woerden, The Netherlands

Matthew Burke PhD
Research Fellow, Urban Research Program
Griffith University, Brisbane
Australia

Cate Burns PhD
Deakin University, WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention
Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences
Melbourne, Australia

Georgina Cairns BSc, MBA
Research Fellow, Institute for Social Marketing
University of Stirling and the Open University
Stirling, UK

Rishi Caleyachetty MBBS, MSc
Doctoral Student
MRC Epidemiology Unit
Addenbrooke's Hospital
Cambridge
UK
Contributors

Rob Carter PhD
Head, Health Economics Unit
Deakin University
Victoria
Australia

Mickey Chopra MD, PhD
Health Systems Research Unit
Medical Research Council
Western Cape, South Africa
Extraordinary Professor
School of Public Health
University of the Western Cape
Parow
South Africa

Deborah A. Cohen MD, MPH
Senior Natural Scientist
The RAND Corporation
Santa Monica
Parow
CA, USA

Camila Corvalán MPH, MD, PhD
Professor, School of Public Health
Faculty of Medicine
University of Chile
Santiago, Chile

Carey Curtis PhD, DipTP, CertTHE, MRPTI, MPIA
Australasian Centre for the Governance and Management of Urban Transport and
Professor, WA Planning and Transport Research Centre
Curtin University of Technology
School of Built Environment
Bentley, Australia

Inez de Beaufort PhD
Professor of Healthcare Ethics
Erasmus Medical Center
Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Ilse De Bourdeaudhuij PhD
Full Professor, Department of Movement and Sport Sciences
Ghent University
Gent, Belgium

Andrea de Silva-Sanigorski, MHN, PhD
Senior Research Fellow, WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention
Deakin University & Melbourne School of Population Health
University of Melbourne
Victoria, Australia

William H. Dietz MD, PhD
Director, Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Atlanta, USA

Colleen Doak MA, PhD
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences
Department of Health Sciences
VU University
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Maureen Dobbins RN, PhD
Associate Professor, McMaster University School of Nursing
and Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics
Faculty of Health Sciences and Career Scientist
Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Hamilton, ON, Canada

Mitch J. Duncan PhD
Senior Post-Doctoral Research Fellow
Institute for Health and Social Science Research
CQU University Australia
Rockhampton, Australia

Christina Economos PhD
New Balance Chair in Childhood Nutrition
Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy
Tufts University
Associate Director, John Hancock Center for Physical Activity and Nutrition
Boston, USA
C. Raina Elley BA(Hons), MBCHB, FRNZCGP, PhD
Senior Lecturer, Department of General Practice and Primary Health Care
School of Population Health
University of Auckland
Auckland, New Zealand

Eva Elliott PhD
RCUK Academic Fellow, Cardiff Institute of Society and Health
School of Social Sciences
Cardiff University
Cardiff, UK

Edward A. Frongillo Jr. PhD
Professor and Chair, Department of Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC, USA

Lisa Gibbs PhD
Senior Research Fellow, Community Partnerships & Health Equity Research
Jack Brockhoff Child Health and Wellbeing Program, McCaughey Centre
Melbourne School of Population Health
University of Melbourne
Victoria, Australia

Gerard Hastings PhD, OBE
Director, Institute for Social Marketing
Stirling and the Open University
UK

Nadine Henley PhD
Professor of Social Marketing
Director of the Centre for Applied Social Marketing Research
Faculty of Business and Law
Edith Cowan University
Joondalup, Australia

Rebecca Hillier MBBS, BA (Hons)
Honorary Research Fellow & G.P. Registrar
Department Public Health Policy
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
London, UK

Karen Hoare MSc, AdvDip Health Sciences, NP, RN, FCNA (NZ), RGN, RSCN, RHV (UK)
Lecturer, Goodfellow Unit and School of Nursing
University of Auckland
Auckland, New Zealand

Søren Holm BA, MA, MD, PhD, DrMedSci
Professor of Bioethics
Centre for Social Ethics and Policy
School of Law
University of Manchester
Manchester, UK

Laura M. Irizarry MS
Center for Research in Nutrition and Health
National Institute of Public Health
Cuernavaca
Morelos, Mexico

Rachel Jackson-Leach MSc Nutrition
Senior Policy Officer
International Association for the Study of Obesity (IASO)
London, UK

W. Philip T. James MD, FRCP
President, International Association for the Study of Obesity
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
London, UK

Sonya Jones PhD
Center for Research in Nutrition and Health Disparities
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC, USA

Juliana Kain MPH
Institute of Nutrition and Food Technology (INTA)
University of Chile
Santiago, Chile

Stef Kremers PhD, MPH
Department of Health Promotion
NUTRIM School for Nutrition, Toxicology and Metabolism
Maastricht University Medical Centre
Maastricht
The Netherlands
Shiriki Kumanyika PhD, MPH
Professor of Epidemiology
Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology
and Department of Pediatrics (Gastroenterology; Nutrition Section)
University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine
Philadelphia, PA, USA

Mark Lawrence BSc (Hons), Grad Dip Nutr and Diet, Grad Dip Epidem and Biostats, MSc, PhD
Director Food Policy Unit
WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention
Deakin University
Melbourne, Australia

Tim Lobstein PhD
Director of Policy and Programmes
International Association for the Study of Obesity
London, UK
Research Fellow, SPRU—Science and Technology Policy Research
University of Sussex
Brighton, Australia

Karen Lock BMCh, PhD
Clinical Senior Lecturer in Public Health
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
London, UK

Jane Martin BA (Hons), MPH
Senior Policy Adviser
Obesity Policy Coalition
Carlton, Australia

Helen Mavoa PhD (Anthropology)
WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention
Melbourne, Australia
[formerly School of Psychology, Deakin University]

Marj Moodie DrPH
Senior Research Fellow, Deakin Health Economics
Deakin University
Melbourne, Australia

Laurence Moore PhD, FFPH, FRSS
Director, Cardiff Institute of Society and Health
School of Social Sciences
Cardiff University
Cardiff, UK

Luis A Moreno MD, PhD
Professor E.U. Ciencias de la Salud
Universidad de Zaragoza
Zaragoza, Spain

Ladda Mo-suwan MD
Associate Professor, Department of Pediatrics
Prince of Songkla University
Hat Yai, Songkhla
Thailand

Simon Murphy PhD, CPsychol
Senior Research Fellow
Cardiff Institute of Society and Health
School of Social Sciences
Cardiff University
Cardiff, UK

Naomi Priest PhD
Jack Brockhoff Child Health and Wellbeing Program,
McCaughhey Centre
Melbourne School of Population Health
University of Melbourne
Victoria, Australia

Lauren Prosser BAppSci, PhD
Research Fellow, The McCaughey Centre
VicHealth Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health and Community Wellbeing
Melbourne School of Population Health
University of Melbourne
Victoria, Australia

Sandrine Raffin MMAA
Co-founder of EPODE
Paris, France
Contributors

**André M.N. Renzaho PhD, MPH, MPHAA**
Senior Research Fellow, WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention
Public Health Research Evaluation and Policy Cluster
Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences
Deakin University
Burwood, Australia

**Neville Rigby**
European Policy Adviser to the Obesity Forum
Neville Rigby & Associates
London, UK

**Elisha Riggs BAppSc(Health Promotion) (Hons)**
Research Fellow, The McCaughey Centre
Melbourne School of Population Health
Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences
University of Melbourne
Carlton, Australia

**Juan A. Rivera PhD**
Center for Research in Nutrition and Health
National Institute of Public Health
Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico

**Vivian Romero PhD**
MURP Research Associate, GAMUT
University of Melbourne
Windsor, Australia

**Andrea M. Sanigorski MHN, PhD**
Senior Research Fellow, WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention
Deakin University & Melbourne School of Population Health
University of Melbourne
Victoria, Australia

**Anne Simmons MND**
Research Fellow, Deakin University School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences
Geelong, Australia

**Saskia te Velde PhD**
Post-doctoral Researcher
Department for Epidemiology & Biostatistics
EMGO Institute for Health and Care Research and VU University Medical Center
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

**Marieke ten Have MA**
Researcher at the Department of Medical Ethics and Department of Public Health at the Erasmus University Rotterdam
Rotterdam, The Netherlands

**Paul Tranter PhD**
Associate Professor in Geography
School of Physical, Environmental and Mathematical Sciences
University of New South Wales
Australian Defence Force Academy
Canberra, Australia

**Tommy L.S. Visscher PhD**
Research Coordinator, Research Centre for Overweight Prevention
EMGO Institute for Health and Care
VU University
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

**Carolyn Whitzman PhD**
Certified Practicing Planner
Planning Institute of Australia
Senior Lecturer in Urban Planning
Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning
University of Melbourne
Parkville, Australia

**Yang Gao PhD, MPH, Bmed**
Instructor, School of Public Health and Primary Care
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong, SAR China
Foreword

Obesity became a major health threat for higher income countries in the last decades of the 20th Century and now early in the 21st Century, most of the world must consider this challenge to our ongoing quest for better health and longer healthy life for all our citizens. A particular concern, both for the long term impact of its sequelae and because it may be more amenable to prevention, is childhood obesity. Preventing childhood obesity must be one of the top priorities of public health and clinical medicine and indeed, public policy.

Preventing Childhood Obesity, with multiple chapters by global experts from diverse fields, offers a breadth of material and thought on this health challenge that can serve as a thorough introduction for those new to the field and a useful text for those already engaged in it. While, many books, monographs and papers have been written with a particular national focus, this book offers a truly global perspective. After setting the nature and extent of the problem ("The context"), it then examines the evidence for prevention in multiple settings and how that evidence can be applied to interventions, policies and practice.

Included in the discussions on childhood obesity are important perspectives on: economics, programme evaluation, monitoring, advocacy, social determinants, politics and stigmatization.

Countries well beyond Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand are now recognizing childhood obesity as national health threats, for example Brazil, Chile, South Africa, India and China. Preventing Childhood Obesity offers us all a concise clear examination of the elements, challenge, setting and complexity of obesity prevention and control while providing the basis for taking steps to address the challenges. It will likely take decades for us to reverse such trends but we all need to make this effort.

Jeffrey P. Koplan, MD, MPH
Director, Emory Global Health Institute
Emory University
Atlanta, Georgia, USA
February 2010
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