



Welsh Association for Gastroenterology and Endoscopy
Cymdeithas Gastroenteroleg ac Endosgopi Cymru

Call for evidence: Inquiry into Childhood Obesity
The National Assembly for Wales' Children and Young People Committee

Response from the Welsh Association of Gastroenterology and Endoscopy (WAGE)

WAGE acknowledges there is a major problem with childhood obesity in Wales, and the medical consequences are becoming increasingly significant. For example, fatty liver disease secondary to obesity is now probably the commonest reason paediatricians see children with abnormal liver function tests. A proportion of these children will go on to develop liver fibrosis/cirrhosis if they don't lose weight. The frequency of other consultations eg depression and lack of self worth, could also be reduced if children were eating better and taking exercise.

However, we feel childhood obesity is primarily a social, cultural and public health issue, and solutions required to tackle the problem lie in this area, rather than in frontline medicine. We merely try and deal with the consequences.

Resources would be best targeted at prevention: through education in and outside school, legislation to curb advertising and availability of unhealthy foods, provision of healthy foods by public bodies such as schools and the NHS. A cultural shift is required and perhaps influential celebrities could play their part.

It would also be useful to evaluate the effect of previous Welsh Government initiatives to tackle this problem so the more effective initiatives can be further developed and ineffective initiatives avoided.

Dr Huw Jenkins, Consultant Paediatrician and paediatric gastroenterology WAGE representative

Dr Ashley Roberts, Consultant Radiologist and WAGE President

On behalf of the the WAGE Executive Committee

11th April 2013