Causes of obesity amongst high school learners: South African perspective

The first South African Demographic and Health Survey was undertaken in 1998 and published in 2002. This survey included South Africans between 15-95 years. In South Africa the 15 year olds are in the middle of the high school. The survey also revealed that child obesity is a global problem as it is in South Africa. Over 17% in adolescents were found to be obese and had obesity related problems. The survey also revealed that children between ages 5-14 had BMI of about 14, 15-29 (about 22). About two high schools were surveyed so as to describe the causes of obesity amongst high school learners. It was revealed that as seen in the 2002 survey, obesity starts at an earlier age. When the children come to high school, they are already having problems with their weight. Amongst the factors identified and described as causes, lack of activity and junk food were the top of the list. The other cited was the fear of being stigmatized as having HIV/AIDS. Change in the school’s curriculum were physical activity was excluded. Of concern are the effects of obesity on teaching and learning because unfit body cannot house a healthy mind. It is recommended that the physical education be brought back to the schools as it will not only help learners to be healthy but educators as well. Parents are also encouraged to improve the eating habits as the main cause if obesity in children starts from home.

Biography

Owen B Nene completed his Secondary Teaching Diploma (STD) in 1985. Currently he is the Head of Department in one of the high schools in Kwazulu-Natal Province, South Africa. He has taught learners in different fields but not limited to art, history as well as geography. He also has a Diploma and vast knowledge of teaching the learners with disabilities. He is a member of several organizations and plays a vital role in decision making.

Owen B Nene

University of South Africa, South Africa

o.b.nene@gmail.com

Notes: