

# THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF ENERGY DRINK CONSUMPTION AMONG CHILDREN

## *How primary health interventions can address this issue?*

### INTRODUCTION

Childhood is a critical time of growth and development in which good nutrition is absolutely essential. Since the introduction of energy drinks onto the market they have become very popular among children yet, they are not aware of the potential negative health effects they can cause. Evidence shows that high sugar beverages are associated with obesity and poor oral health in children, what is needed is a change in public policy and social environments to start tackling this issue (Apovian, 2004).

### NURSING IMPLICATIONS:

- ♦ Literature shows that there is a number of negative health impacts associated with energy drink consumption. The link between obesity and excess sugar intake is evident. Consequently, these poor nutritional choices can lead to chronic diseases such as, cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes (Ministry of Health, 2015 a).
- ♦ Children are at considerable risk of being diagnosed with obesity associated diseases in adulthood, due to prolonged exposure to excess sugar of energy drinks from such a young age.
- ♦ More children are now being diagnosed with obesity related diseases, placing the health system under increasing demand to provide extra health care services for what are, preventable diseases (Ministry of Health, 2015 b).
- ♦ Energy drinks can impact on children's mental health, they contain additives that can cause addiction, panic and anxiety disorders plus have the potential to cause social and learning difficulties. Therefore adding pressure to deliver appropriate services (Seifert, Schaechter, Hershorin & Lipschultz, 2011).

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Ottawa Charter health promotion framework can be utilised in primary health care to achieve the goal of 'health for all' (WHO, 1986).
- ♦ Building Public Policy - Applying a sugar tax to products with high sugar, this will lead individuals towards the healthier untaxed options.
  - ♦ Creative Supportive Environments - Promoting healthy communities, nurses can provide education and advocate to support change for better health outcomes for children (Patterson, 2007).
  - ♦ Strengthen Community Action - Empower communities and families by providing them with effective resources that will enable them to take control of their health.
  - ♦ Develop Personal Skills - Education is key in providing children with the skills and knowledge to change their nutritional habits.
  - ♦ Reorient Health Services - Primary and secondary health sectors will facilitate and work in partnership with children and communities to achieve the best outcomes (WHO, 1986).

### CONCLUSION

Energy drinks can impact on the physical health and well-being of children. The key to changing children's nutritional habits for the better is health promotion. Primary health interventions that work alongside schools, families and communities who participate in health promotion strategies, will be crucial in addressing this health issue.

#### REFERENCES:

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## SUMMARY

Energy drinks are so readily available to children and yet they are detrimental to their health (Ministry of Health, 2015 a). I chose to present literature based evidence as a poster, which can be distributed in schools and environments where children work and play. A colourful poster will capture the children's attention and they are more likely to engage with the information on it. Health promotion is the key to improving and changing health behaviours for the better. By promoting awareness of the potential effects of energy drinks and creating supportive environments within the community, this can lead to a change in health attitudes (Patterson, 2007).

### Research using the PECOT model

**Population** - Children aged 6 to 14 years who are consuming these energy drinks and children who have older siblings or family members who have experienced health related issues from drinking energy drinks.

**Explanation** - Children in this age range are influenced by their family and peers through school and social activity, therefore they are at increasing risk of negative health effects in adulthood. At this age they have the ability to adapt to health lifestyle changes early and can start to understand the perception that healthy options are going to be better for them, than the not so healthy options.

**Exposure/Intervention** - Children that engage in primary health promotion activities that target healthy nutrition, with the ongoing support of family and their surrounding environments will benefit significantly.

**Explanation** - Evidence based articles will include examined information and what strategies have been implemented to target energy drink consumption among children and prevent health issues.

**Comparison/Control** - Children who consume energy drinks and are at risk of negative health effects due to the lack of family knowledge and education of healthy interventions and poor nutrition advice.

**Explanation** - It is interesting to identify the reasons of why families who choose not to participate in health promotion activities.

**Outcome** - Control of body weight by adapting new healthy lifestyle choices such as, healthy nutrition and reducing their energy drink consumption. Through education and health promotion activities.

**Explanation** - By reducing their energy drink intake will this give them a healthier body weight and reduce the risks of the negative health effects associated with energy drinks.

**Time** - Ongoing.

By using the PECOT model I have refined my question to:

**The health implications of energy drink consumption for children and what health promotion interventions are needed to address this issue.**

### Reference:

*www.epiq.co.nz*. (2012). Retrieved March 15, 2015, from GATE-Centre for evidence - Based medicine:<http://www.cebm.net/wpcontent/uploads/2014/06/gatepresentationoxford2012-rod-jackson.pdf>