



Media Release

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Hungary - Lowest life expectancy linked with high CVD mortality – prevention essential

Hungary has one of the lowest life expectancy rates at birth among the member states of the European Union: 77 years for females and only 68 years for males as compared to the 76 and 82 years for males and females in the EU, respectively.

The low life expectancy is mainly due to high mortality rate from cardiovascular diseases. The development of cardiovascular diseases start in childhood especially in an obesogenic environment. The early manifestation of vascular disease has been recently reported in a 2-year-old morbidly obese boy (Eur J Pediatr 166: 37, 2007)

The prevalence of childhood obesity has been increasing all over the world and Hungary is not an exception either. The prevalence of overweight in Hungary is between 9 and 19 percent depending on age and gender. This means that the prevalence has doubled in some age categories since the eighties. Lifestyle changes are to be blamed for this steep increase (see Table below).

Lifestyle changes in Hungary between 1987 and 2000

Factor	1987	2000
Watching TV	35-45 min per day	69-84 min per day
Regular meals per day	4-5	2-3
Phys act classes in a week	3-5	2
Weekly physical activity out of school	3-3.8 hr	1-1.5 hr

Budapest: Hungarian Central Office of Statistics; 2002. p 58-94

Childhood obesity can be prevented on a population level with the concerted action of the family, educational system, governments, food industry, mass media and civil society. There is an urgent need for specific actions both at national and European levels in regard to succeed in fighting childhood obesity and preventing later consequences. Prevention has to start as early as intrauterine life and continue throughout childhood and adolescence.

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