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Tackling childhood obesity by implementing an integrated care approach

van de Goor, Ien; de Laat, Sanne; van Mil, M.; Jacobs-van Der Bruggen, M. A. M.; van Mil, E.G.

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Introduction

This study evaluated an integrated care approach focusing on inter-sectoral collaboration aimed to tackle childhood overweight.

Method

- **Fourteen professionals** from the three sectors were interviewed.
- **Face to face semi-structured interviews**
- To determine in and outside sector **collaboration**, perceived **outcomes** and **hindering and facilitating factors**.

Results

- **Collaboration** within each sector was adequately established. All were in contact with **the central care provider**. However, **minimal contact with social domain partners** was reported.
- **Hindering factors:** the complexity of childhood overweight, not knowing network partners, unclarity in referrals, feedback, roles and responsibilities. Also, frequent changes in policy and personnel, lack of a visible leader, funding and time.
- **Facilitating factors:** a positive attitude towards intersectoral collaboration, short communication lines, a shared vision, trusting each other's expertise, and formalized agreements and periodic meetings with partners.

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Ien van de Goor, PhD, Sanne de Laat, MD MSc, Marieke van Mil, MSc, Monique Jacobs, PhD, Edgar van Mil, MD PhD

Tranzo, Scientific Center for Care and Wellbeing, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Tilburg University

Key messages

- In daily practice professionals experience structural factors hindering network collaboration as required for an integrated care approach.
- Specific attention for organizational aspects is required to optimize the functioning of networks linking professionals from public health, medical and social domains, essential in preventing childhood overweight.

