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What works in china? A literature review on effectiveness of current intervention for combating obesity among chinese school-aged children.*Li X.¹, Hesketh T.¹*¹University College London Institute for Global Health, London, United Kingdom

Introduction: Since 1978, when the Deng Xiaoping's reforms including "Opening up to the World" policy initiated, China has witnessed dramatic economic growth. Undergoing nutrition transition, the burden of nutritional problems has been changing from under-nutrition to over-nutrition. The prevalence of overweight/obesity among Chinese children aged 7–18 has increased dramatically, with 19.0% and 10.9% for boys and girls respectively in 2010.

Aim: This review is to explore the effectiveness of interventions for prevention and treatment of overweight/obesity among Chinese schoolchildren.

Methods: I identified primary studies published from 1980s until 2013. Details of data sources, key terms, inclusion and exclusion criteria and the whole searching process were summarized in figure 1. Data on author, study location, study design, age group, sample size, interventions, duration of study, length of follow-up, and findings were extracted for comparison.

Results: 33 studies were finally identified fulfilling the inclusion criteria. 28 were conducted in school settings with 3 in community surroundings and another 2 in the family setting. The studies consisted of one or more components as health/nutrition education, diet adjustment, physical activity, behavior modification and parental involvement. The measurements of study outcome included anthropometric measures, changes in overweight/obesity rate and changes in levels of obesity-related biomedical markers. Although the methodologies used in studies varied, 23 out of 33 (69.7%) were defined as effective according to statistically significant results in outcomes.

Conclusion: Heterogeneity in many aspects of study methodologies limited the meta-analysis of effectiveness of current interventions. Comprehensive school-based interventions seem promising for preventing and treating overweight among Chinese schoolchildren. Insufficient evidence is available to support the effectiveness of community- or family-based interventions.

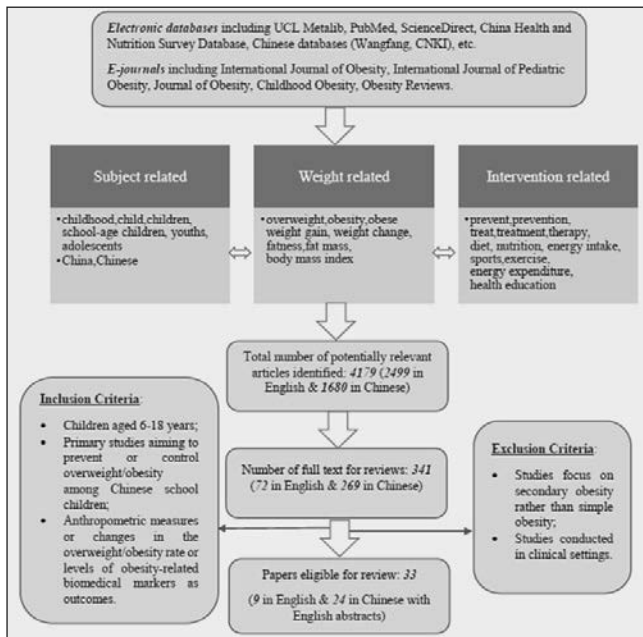


Fig. 1. Flow chart of literature searching