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## Obese children crave food and they will do anything to have it

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Paediatric obesity is a complex public health issue that many health professionals find difficult to address and provide relevant treatment. The current practice which recommends an increase in physical activity and a decrease in energy intake is a simple solution for a complex problem. Unfortunately, this simple approach has had little impact on the rates of paediatric obesity. Current paediatric obesogenic environments perpetuate weight gain in children by encouraging overconsumption of negative food choices that are high in kilojoules and nutrient poor. The aim of the study was to improve our understanding of the obese child and the role they play in their obesity. Our findings revealed that obese children are highly food-focused experiencing hyperphagia that drives their desire for food and perpetuates disordered food behaviours such as self-feeding, stealing food, hiding food, overeating and the use of a wide range of coercive behaviours to acquire

the foods they desire. Parents of obese children stated that their children love food, are always hungry, pester them for food repetitively and describe the child as having a food addiction. Food consumes an obese child's life, they think, talk and crave food constantly day after day and placing food restriction only creates negative behaviours. The parents experience arguments, pestering, tantrums, verbal and physical abuse leading to negative psychosocial outcomes for both the child and parent. There needs to be more recognition of an obese child's dependence on negative food choices which leads to the development of disordered food behaviours negatively affecting their weight gain. Furthermore, parents are not equipped with the skill set to cope with the obese child's behavioural issues and therefore health professionals need to be more understanding of the challenges that parents face when they try to reduce food intake and increase physical activity. ..

### Biography

Jessica J Lee obtained the Master's degree in Nutrition and Dietetics from Griffith University Gold Coast in 2007. She was awarded a Certificate of Paediatric Nutrition in 2010 at the Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne to augment her knowledge in the area of paediatrics. Jessica is currently undertaking a Higher Degree Research Program through Griffith University Gold Coast. Jessica has an extensive experience as a paediatric Dietitian specialising in the treatment of overweight and obese children using alternative approaches. Jessica's doctoral research undertaking is in Paediatric Overweight and Obesity which investigates determinates that influence parental food choices. Having a genuine love of children and a passion to make a difference in the everyday life of children drives Jessica's motivation to explore paediatric obesity.

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