



PQ 20713/22

To ask the Minister for Health if the targets for percentage of population with healthy weight as set out by the Changing Cardiovascular Health: Cardiovascular Health Policy 2010-2019 have been met; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Burke

PQ 20113/22 was referred to HSE for response.

The targets set out by the Changing Cardiovascular Health: Cardiovascular Health Policy 2010-2019 in relation to healthy weight are:

Restore the BMI distribution of adults to levels as assessed 10 years ago (in 1999, 43% healthy weight; 39% overweight; 18% obese). This is to be achieved by:

- halting the current annual increase in the prevalence of overweight and obesity in the medium term (by 2014);
- achieving a modest reduction in prevalence of obesity within 10 years (by 2019).

Targets for adults over 10-year timeframe:

- Healthy weight: increase from 38% to 43%
- Overweight: maintain overall levels at 38%
- Obesity: decrease from 23% to 18%

Targets for children over 10-year timeframe:

- Healthy weight: increase from 78% to 84%
- Overweight: decrease from 11% to 7%
- Obesity: decrease from 11% to 9%

Two national survey instruments provide routine data for monitoring population level trends in weight across adults and children – the annual Healthy Ireland survey and the Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (part of WHO-Europe COSI).

Adults: Anthropometric data was collected as part of the Healthy Ireland survey in 2015, 2017 and 2019. The results indicate that the prevalence of obesity, overweight and healthy weight across the adult population remained relatively stable over this period with 2019 prevalence rates at:

- Healthy weight: 37%
- Overweight: 37%
- Obesity: 23%

In this context, the target set in Changing Cardiovascular Health of halting the annual increase has been achieved. Though the target for modest decrease over a 10 year period has not been met, except in relation to overweight where there has been a 2% reduction on 1999 figures.

Children: Over the period 2008 to 2020 the Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative data shows an overall decline in overweight and obesity in first class children (age 7) from 21.6% to 15.8%. In 2018/19:

- Healthy weight 76.9% boys / 71.9% girls
- Overweight 12.9% boys / 16.7 % girls
- Obesity 4.4% boys / 4.2% girls

Data from COSI indicates that prevalence of overweight and obesity increases with age, particularly for girls, and is higher in children attending DEIS schools indicating a correlation with social disadvantage. In this context the targets set for children in Changing Cardiovascular Health have not been met.

In 2016, in the context of the Healthy Ireland Framework 2015-2025, the Department of Health published Healthy Weight for Ireland: Obesity Policy and Action Plan which put a focus on a cross-government and multi-sectoral response to address the issue of overweight, obesity and its impact on health. An interim review of progress on implementation is due to be published by Department of Health in 2022. The Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025 puts a renewed focus on cross-government and cross-sectoral actions to address overweight, obesity and its impact on health.

Healthy Weight for Ireland: Obesity Policy and Action Plan (2016-2025) set the following targets in relation to population level prevalence of overweight and obesity:

- A sustained downward trend, averaging 0.5% per annum, in excess levels of weight in adults and children
- A reduction in the gap in obesity levels between the highest and the lowest socio-economic groups by 10% by 2025.

Kind regards



Sarah O'Brien
HSE National Lead Healthy Eating Active Living Programme