**Introduction**

- Children and infants from a low socioeconomic and indigenous background are at greater risk of obesity than their more advantaged counterparts.
- There is a lack of evidence of the influences on infants to understand why they are at greater risk.
- Parenting, as well as children’s health behaviours are not only important determinants of weight but are also amenable to change through making them key intervention targets.

**Objective**

- We aimed to identify and synthesise research on the pathways through which disadvantaged infants and children may experience greater weight gain, disadvantaged families and Indigenous families.

**Methods**

**Electronic searches**

- Between June 2013 and January 2014, we conducted a systematic literature search of ten electronic databases (e.g. Medline, PsycINFO) as well as visually scanning reference lists from relevant studies and undertaking citation searching.
- A combination of terms related to parenting, child or infant, low socioeconomic, indigenous, obesity, diet, eating, physical activity and sedentary behaviour.

**Inclusion**

- Studies from OECD countries aimed at children aged 0-5 years that assessed any of the pathways presented in figure 1

**Study Selection**

- Two independent reviewers screened studies and extracted data according to eligibility criteria.

**Data Extraction**

- Key data were extracted from studies using a template.
- The quality of the selected studies was appraised using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT).

**Conclusions**

- This review has highlighted the significant gaps in our understanding of the parent and child factors that underlie associations between disadvantage and weight.
- Overall, only a small number of factors that could affect weight gain in disadvantaged families has been considered :
  - Breastfeeding, dietary intake
  - Parental feeding style such as restriction, control and pressure to eat.
  - Parental feeding behaviours, or how children are breast- or formula-fed (e.g. feeding to appetite) has seldom been undertaken in disadvantaged groups.
- Most studies were assessing parent and child effects on overweight and obesity in disadvantaged families focused on ethnic minority groups in the USA; generalising to other groups is difficult.
- Clustering of diet, weight and feeding behaviours by education and ethnicity, as well as the cross-sectional nature, lack of theoretical basis and a reliance upon self-report instruments hindered the ability to tease out independent effects of each of the risk factors.
- More effort is needed at gaining deeper understanding of underlying reasons explaining greater weight gain in disadvantaged families through the use of appropriate study designs, measurement tools in a range of population groups in order to provide useful information to incorporate into interventions appropriate to such families.

**Further Information**

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