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COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF A NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM IN CHILDREN

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Background and Aim: To estimate the long-term cost-effectiveness of an obesity prevention nutrition education program as delivered to all Ardebil 7-11 years old over 1 year

Methods: This study is a standard cost-effectiveness analysis from a societal perspective, with a 5% discount rate and a no-intervention comparator, as recommended by the US Panel on Cost-effectiveness in Health and Medicine. Costs of implementation, administration, and future obesity-related medical costs were included. Effectiveness was based on a cluster-randomized, controlled trial in 15 schools during the 2014-2015 school year and linked to published estimates of childhood-to-adulthood body mass index trajectories using a decision analytic model

Results: The Food, Health, & Choices intervention was estimated to cost 120000000 Rials and result in 153 fewer males and 225 fewer females becoming obese (0.6% of Ardebil school students), saving 1,436 quality-adjusted life-years (QALYs) and 60000000 Rials in direct medical costs. Food, Health, & Choices is predicted to be cost-effective at 30000000Rials /QALY (95% confidence interval, -Rials 62300/QALY to Rials 75230/QALY) with estimates up to Rials 180000/QALY in sensitivity analyses

Conclusion: This cost-effectiveness model suggests that a nutrition education program in schools is effective and cost-effective in reducing childhood obesity, consistent with the authors' hypothesis and previous literature. Future research should assess the feasibility and sustainability of scale-up

Keywords: children; cost-effectiveness; economic modeling; nutrition education