

Ahrens, W. et al. "Understanding and preventing childhood obesity and related disorders- IDEFICS: a European multilevel epidemiological approach." *Nutrition, Metabolism and Cardiovascular Diseases* 16.4 (2006): 302-08.

**Abstract:**

The environment of children has drastically changed in Europe during the last decades as reflected in unhealthy dietary habits and sedentary lifestyle. Nutrition obviously plays a part in the development of overweight in childhood. However, dietary factors and physical activity are also involved in the development of metabolic syndrome, type II diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, osteoporosis, and postural deformities like scoliosis, effects related in part to excessive weight gain. To stop the resulting epidemic of diet- and lifestyle-induced morbidity, efficient evidence-based approaches are needed. These issues are the focus of IDEFICS (Identification and prevention of dietary- and lifestyle-induced health effects in children and infants), a five-year project proposed under the sixth EU framework. The IDEFICS consortium comprises 25 research centres and SMEs across Europe. The planned prospective study will identify risk profile inventories for children susceptible to any of these disorders with emphasis on obesity and its co-morbid conditions. Genetic and non-genetic factors, psychosocial factors and social settings will be considered. The project will devise tailored prevention strategies that are effective, easy to implement and that account for the needs of different social groups. Population-based studies will investigate the impact of sensory perception and provide results concerning internal and external triggers of food choices and children's consumer behaviour. The ethical implications of a "right not to know" of genetic factors will be addressed. We will propose knowledge-based guidelines on dietary and lifestyle activities for health promotion and disease prevention in children for health professionals, stakeholders and consumers.