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## WESTERN SYDNEY DIABETES PRESENTS OBESITY FORUM

An online forum by Western Sydney Diabetes for GPs and health professionals on supporting them to tackle childhood and adolescent obesity, is now available for viewing.

On May 24, WSD hosted the *Child and Adolescent Obesity: Tackling a Challenging Problem* via Zoom in an effort to assist health professionals to gain an awareness of treatment and referral options available for their patients.

WSD Preventions Manager Janine Dawson said the aim of the forum was to provide information, tips and tools for health professionals to assist in identifying and treating a child and adolescent with overweight or obesity in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

“We understand this is a subject many health professionals struggle to address and provide referral pathways and hoped this forum would provide useful information and advice,” Ms Dawson said.

Chaired by Conjoint Professor Diana O’Halloran, chair of WentWest, the expert panel included internationally renowned paediatrician and researcher into childhood obesity, Professor Louise Baur; dietitian Hiba Jebeile; and Clinical Associate Professor Li Ming Wen, Director of Population Health Research and Evaluation Hub, Sydney LHD, School of Public Health, University of Sydney.

Ms Dawson said Professor Baur provided tips on how to identify the child with obesity and encouraged the audience not to rely on visual perception, but to approach the identification in a far more routine, methodical, and accurate way.

“Professor Baur challenged health professionals to tackle the stigma associated with overweight and obesity and encouraged them to be role models through working with the child and family in a supportive and unbiased way,” Ms Dawson said.

“Tips such as ‘Aim to keep your waist less than half your height’ provided some key take home messages that could be used by the whole audience.”

Well-known dietitian Hiba Jebeile outlined the challenges for adolescents associated with their eating behaviours and social environment.

“She gave a great rundown on a variety of novel approaches that Health professionals could use in working with the adolescent with obesity and related comorbidities or severe obesity,” Ms Dawson said.

“Hiba reiterated that not one diet suits everyone and that there are a range of tailored diets that are suitable. She also emphasised the need for professionally supervised programs to ensure safety.”

Li Ming Wen provided a rundown on the *Healthy Beginnings* trial which addressed the issue of childhood obesity in early years.

He spoke about the suite of interventions that have been used including home visiting, telephone and SMS support.

A full recording of the forum is on the myINTERACT app.

“We are keen to assist as many health professionals as possible, so having this as a permanent education tool is highly beneficial for future education for GPs,” Ms Dawson said.

To find the forum, register on the myINTERACT app:

<https://rego.interact.technology/wsd/>

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