
PREFACE

Our generation bears witness to striking increases in childhood obesity and its co-morbidities including type 2 diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidemia, sleep apnea, and fatty liver disease. Despite a wealth of investigation, there is considerable controversy regarding the etiology of childhood obesity and the optimal approaches for prevention and treatment.

This book has a number of features that should make it a unique resource for those who care for obese children and their families. First, the perspective is international in scope; the distinguished authors are drawn from Europe, Canada, and Israel as well as the United States. Second, the discussion of etiology and pathogenesis is far-reaching and includes an analysis of historical and sociocultural as well as biochemical, metabolic, neuroendocrinologic, and genetic determinants. Third, the short- and long-term complications of childhood obesity are reviewed in depth. Fourth, there is a detailed and lively discussion of therapeutic approaches including lifestyle counselling, pharmacotherapy, and bariatric surgery, followed by a thoughtful assessment of the biological and sociocultural challenges to success. Finally, the roles of globalization and governmental policy in the worldwide spread of childhood obesity are explored and implications for social action are discussed.

I conclude many of the chapters with one or more comments and questions raised during my editorial review. The authors' responses highlight some of the problems that we continue to face in understanding and coping with obesity and metabolic disorders in children.

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Michael Freemark

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