Evidence and best practice in promoting healthy diet and physical activity

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EVIDENCE AND BEST PRACTICE IN PROMOTING HEALTHY DIET AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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CONCLUSIONS
Evidence on promotion of healthy diet and physical activity is sparse. Collection and discussion of best practice on best practice from Members of the Healthy cities network denmark shows

BACKGROUND
Public health challenge: Health professionals, policymakers and decision makers need evidence to guide health promoting initiatives and interventions.

To ensure that interventions have a positive impact on core health measures a comprehensive and evidence based engagement is needed. But evidence on promoting healthy diet and physical exercise on community level is sparse.

PURPOSE
Main objective: If influence from lifestyle habits is to be challenged there is a need to act even though evidence is sparse. Until more comprehensive evidence on promoting healthy diet and physical activity on a community level is present, best practice should be implemented.

METHODS
Evidence and best practice:
Review of the international literature primarily reviews including but not only randomized controlled trials and best practice experiences were collected from local health professionals in Denmark.

The ecological model of health promotion “The healthy settings approach”, which enables a comprehensive means by inclusion of the majority of communities, and facilitates the use of knowledge and best practice experienced by local health professionals.

In order to obtain knowledge on effective interventions information on health professionals’ experiences with best practice was collected and a review of the international literature was accomplished. Best practice and relevance of findings from the literature was discussed with the Danish Healthy Cities Network where the majority of Danish municipalities are engaged.

RESULTS
In absence of evidence on health promoting activities, a review of the literature and collection of best practice in order to emerge a set of standard recommendations, shows that emphasizing on structural health promotion is to be recommended. Completion of policies in main settings such as child care centers, schools and workplaces, emphasizing on access to healthy choices and securing healthy environments could play an important role in promoting healthy diet and physical activity.