

PHD SCHOLARSHIP - SOCIOECONOMIC INEQUALITIES IN OBESITY – A GLOBAL POLICY RESPONSE

Centre for Population Health Research, School of Health and Social Development

A PhD scholarship is available in Deakin University's Centre for Population Health Research, School of Health and Social Development. The PhD student, under the guidance of the Chief Investigator, will initiate and conduct research on the topic of '*Socioeconomic inequalities in obesity – a global policy response*' led by Dr Kathryn Backholer and Prof Anna Peeters.

The successful applicant will be based at the Burwood Campus.

Research Topic

In high-income countries, the prevalence of obesity follows a socioeconomic gradient – the lower the socioeconomic position the greater the risk of adverse weight gain and the greater the prevalence of obesity. Reducing socioeconomic inequalities is not just an argument of social justice – reducing inequalities in obesity among those who bear the greatest burden also has a sound economic argument. Nonetheless, it is currently unclear what actions countries are taking to address these inequalities. Population-level regulatory policies that act to reduce obesity across the entire population have enormous potential to improve population health, but may be markedly less effective for individuals with a lower socioeconomic position. To ensure socioeconomic inequalities in obesity do not widen it is essential that the differential impact of population-level obesity policies across socioeconomic groups is well understood. The adoption and implementation of population-level obesity policies has been gaining considerable traction in recent years within middle- and high-income countries, however the health equity impact of these policies is unclear.

Aim of the Project

To advance the current understanding of how socioeconomic inequalities in obesity may be reduced through population-level obesity policies. Specifically,

In a real-world setting, evaluate the differential impact of the recently introduced mandatory kilojoule labelling policy in Victoria by markers of socioeconomic position.

Analyse the global commitment to reducing the socioeconomic gradient in obesity by conducting a policy document analysis.

Systematically review the literature on the extent to which marketing (in all forms) of unhealthy food and beverage products to children is socioeconomically patterned.

Analyse time-trends in the consumption of ultra-processed foods by socioeconomic position disease.

Value and benefits

A stipend of \$26,288 per annum tax exempt for 3 years.

Eligibility criteria

- Applicants must meet Deakin's PhD entry requirements, be enrolling full-time and hold an Honours degree (First Class) or a Master's degree with a substantial research component in a related field. Please refer to the [entry pathways](#) to higher degrees by research for further information.
- Applications are open to Australian/New Zealand citizens and Australian permanent residents.

How to apply

Please refer to the [Apply for a research degree](#) webpage for application information.

Further information

If you wish to discuss your research interests and project proposal before applying, please contact Kathryn Backholer, [email](#), (03)9244 3836.