Introduction: Second Forum on Childhood Obesity Interventions1,2

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The accelerated increase in the incidence of people being overweight or obese in all population groups in many countries, especially Mexico, over the last 20 years has prompted health authorities to consider stricter measures to control this public health issue, particularly in children. The commitment to take action against obesity should be shared by individuals, government, the food industry, nongovernmental organizations, and academic personnel through policies and actions to promote a healthier life style.

The Fundación Mexicana para la Salud, a nonprofit organization with the mission of improving health in Mexico, organized this Second Forum on Childhood Obesity Interventions, and invited several experts to propose solutions for consideration by authorities and others in positions to obtain tangible results. The First Forum on Childhood Obesity Interventions was held in Mexico City in November 2009, and the proceedings were published in this journal (1).

This second forum was an event aimed at health professionals involved in obesity research and practice and interested in learning more about interventions in other countries. It was especially directed at government decision-makers, the food industry, nongovernmental organizations, and academic personnel. The forum was intended to offer scientists from different countries an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences about the factors associated with childhood overweight and obesity in their own countries, as well as different solutions that have been applied and the levels of government and public participation in those countries. Countries such as France and Brazil provide a clear example of how to initiate programs to decrease obesity that are based on a shared responsibility among individuals, institutions, and society.

This time, besides Mexican researchers, experts from Scotland, France, Spain, the United States, Brazil, and Chile were invited. These individuals devote their professional efforts to understanding and proposing solutions to reduce the number of overweight and obese children, including developing policies for schools and communities to implement.

Dr. John Reilly (2) presented a systematic review of the programs and evidence in the United Kingdom in “Evidence-Based Obesity Prevention in Childhood and Adolescence: Critique of Recent Etiological Studies, Preventive Interventions, and Policies.” He mentioned that the recent “stabilization” in overweight and obesity prevalence figures should not be regarded as supporting the belief that the obesity issue has been overcome, despite the fact that a better understanding of recent world trends could be useful as a prevention strategy in the near future. He also discussed the importance of making policies informed by evidence based on etiology and prevention.

Dr. Michel Chauliac (3) presented “Changing the Food Environment: The French Experience,” wherein he recalled the policies implemented in France to combat the obesity problem, including actions related to educating and informing the population; changing the environment; preventing, detecting, and treating those disorders related to nutritional status; establishing systems to monitor nutritional status; and developing research in the human nutrition field.

Juliana Kain, MPH, (4) presented a comparison of results in “School-Based Obesity Prevention Interventions for Chilean Children during the Past Decades: Lessons Learned” obtained in 2 different environments, Casablanca and Makul, where school-based interventions took place. She discussed the limitations they encountered while conducting this study.
Dr. Germán Vicente-Rodríguez (5) gave the lecture entitled “Impact of Social Marketing in the Prevention of Childhood Obesity,” which provided a general overview of what social marketing entails and the way it could be used to prevent childhood obesity.

Dr. Jodi Stookey (6) presented the study “Orange Juice Limits Post-Prandial Fat Oxidation after Breakfast in Normal-Weight Adolescents and Adults.” The study explains the importance of consuming water during meals. The results suggest that when people consume their meals with energy-containing beverages instead of water, regardless of the excessive energy consumption, the ability to oxidize the fat consumed with their meal is lessened.

Dr. Raul Bastarrachea (7) presented an overview of studies on how the understanding of the genetic basis of gene expression will bring knowledge of the processes that connect genotype to clinical and cellular traits, representing the foundation of the science of systems biology.

Finally, our group presented a study describing physical activity and food intake measured by accelerometry and food consumption surveys, respectively, in obese and normal-weight school children (8).

At the end of the forum, a wide overview was presented that showed the experiences in different countries along with a few explanations of why some interventions are working and others are not. In addition, novel proposals were introduced that invite us to use all this information to stop the childhood obesity problem.

Acknowledgments
All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Literature Cited