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## Rapid Responses to:

LETTERS:

Alan Sutton

**Childhood obesity and consumption of fizzy drinks: Play outside to reduce childhood obesity**

BMJ 2004; 329: 54-a [Full text]

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## Rapid Responses published:

▼ **Childhood obesity : A side effect of being a "screenager"?**

Mark D. Griffiths (2 July 2004)

### Childhood obesity : A side effect of being a "screenager"?

2 July 2004



Mark D. Griffiths,  
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Send response to  
journal:

Re: Childhood obesity  
: A side effect of being  
a "screenager"?

I have read with interest the many letters on the issue of childhood obesity and the causes for the increase over the last decade. I agree with Spence (1) many of us ate junk food as kids and did not become obese. I also empathise with many of the points made by Sutton (2) that parents are afraid to let their children play out because of perceptions about being a poor parent or concerns over child safety. For me, the one real difference between my childhood and children now is the amount of time they spend in front of a screen either watching television, playing videogames and/or surfing the Internet. My own research into "screenagers" shows that some children and adolescents spend large chunks of leisure time engaged in sedentary activities (3). Furthermore, research has directly highlighted links between videogame playing and weight increase. For instance, Shimai and colleagues (4) found that obesity was correlated with long periods of videogame playing in Japanese children. This finding has also been found in young French children (5). In the UK, Johnson and Hackett (6) reported that there was an inverse relationship between physical activity and playing videogames in schoolgirls. Childhood obesity is clearly an area of great importance but it is highly likely that the root causes are complex and multi-facted.

References

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- (5) Deheger M, Rolland-Cachera MF, Fontvielle AM. Physical activity and body composition in 10 year old French children : Linkages with nutritional intake? International Journal of Obesity 1997; 21: 372-379.
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Competing interests: None declared

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