

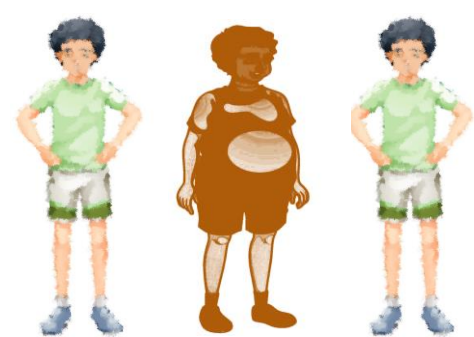
# RETURNING TO HEALTHY WEIGHT AFTER DEVELOPING OVERWEIGHT OR OBESITY IN CHILDREN: DOES PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE?

## KEY MESSAGES

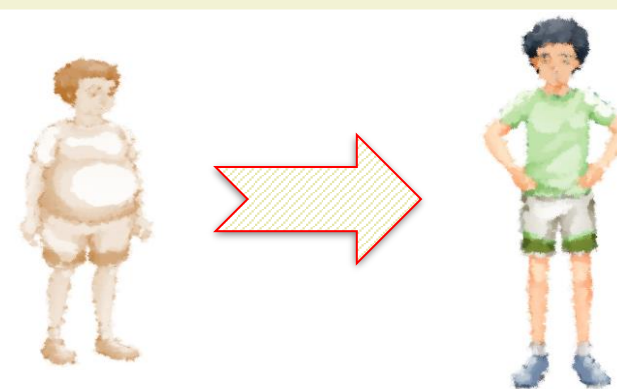
- ✓ Better psychological well-being at age 11 is associated with returning to healthy weight by age 17.
- ✓ Late childhood or early adolescence (age 11) may be a sensitive period in which psychological well-being has a pronounced relationship with future weight trajectory.

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## BACKGROUND

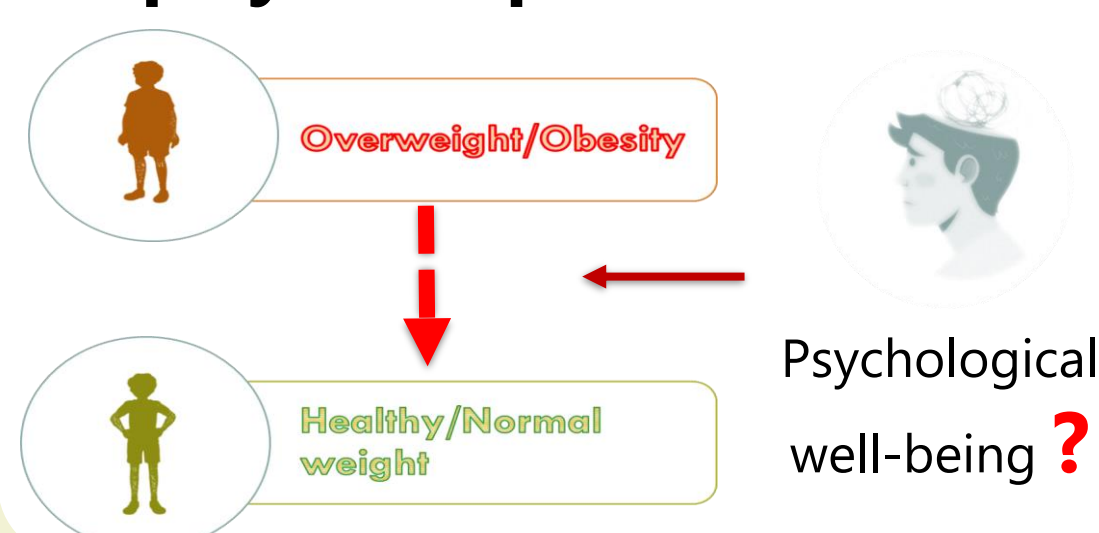


In England, **1 in 3** children aged 10-11 years live with overweight or obesity [1].



Some children remain overweight or continue to have obesity whilst others return to healthy weight by end of childhood [2]. **We do not know why...**

Psychological well-being may play an important role...



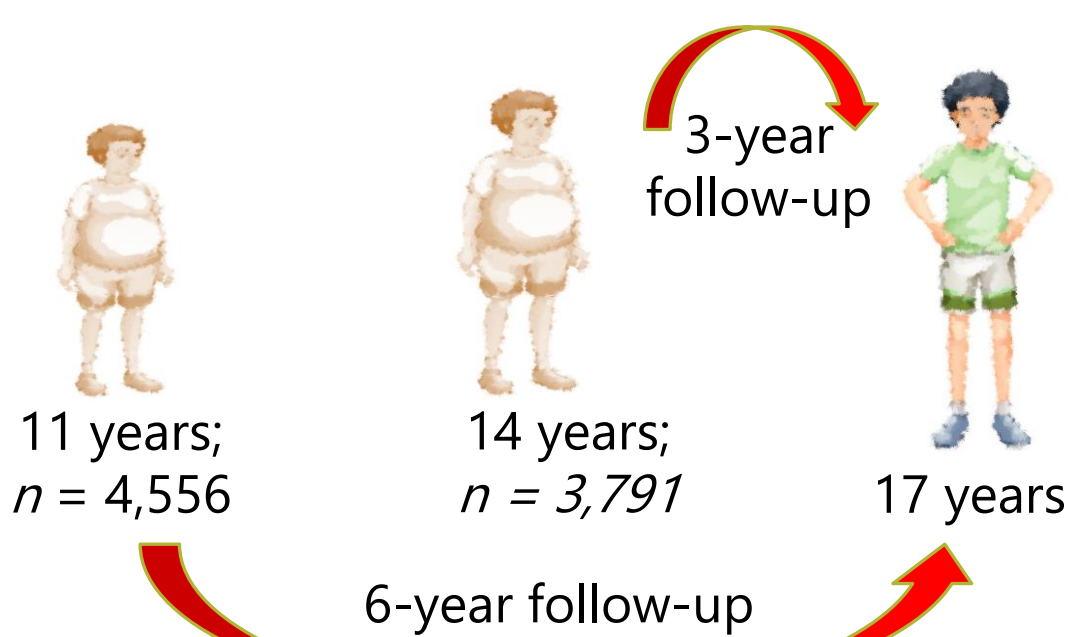
HERE IS WHAT WE DID...



## METHODS

### UK Millenium Cohort Study

Ages 11 & 14 → baseline  
Age 17 → follow-up



Children **with overweight or obesity** at baseline were included.

Psychological measures



Baseline psychological measures were grouped as **indexes of caregiver-reported child mental health** (no. 1 & 2) and **child-reported psychosocial well-being** (no. 3 – 7).

Data analysis

### Main analyses

The associations between baseline indexes (caregiver-reported child mental health, child-reported psychosocial well-being) and returning to healthy weight vs. persistence of overweight and obesity were examined.

Sociodemographic characteristics and pubertal status were controlled.

### Additional analyses

- ✓ Evaluating the role of individual psychological well-being measures
- ✓ Examining whether the timing of psychological well-being being assessed (ages 11 vs. 14) is more important.

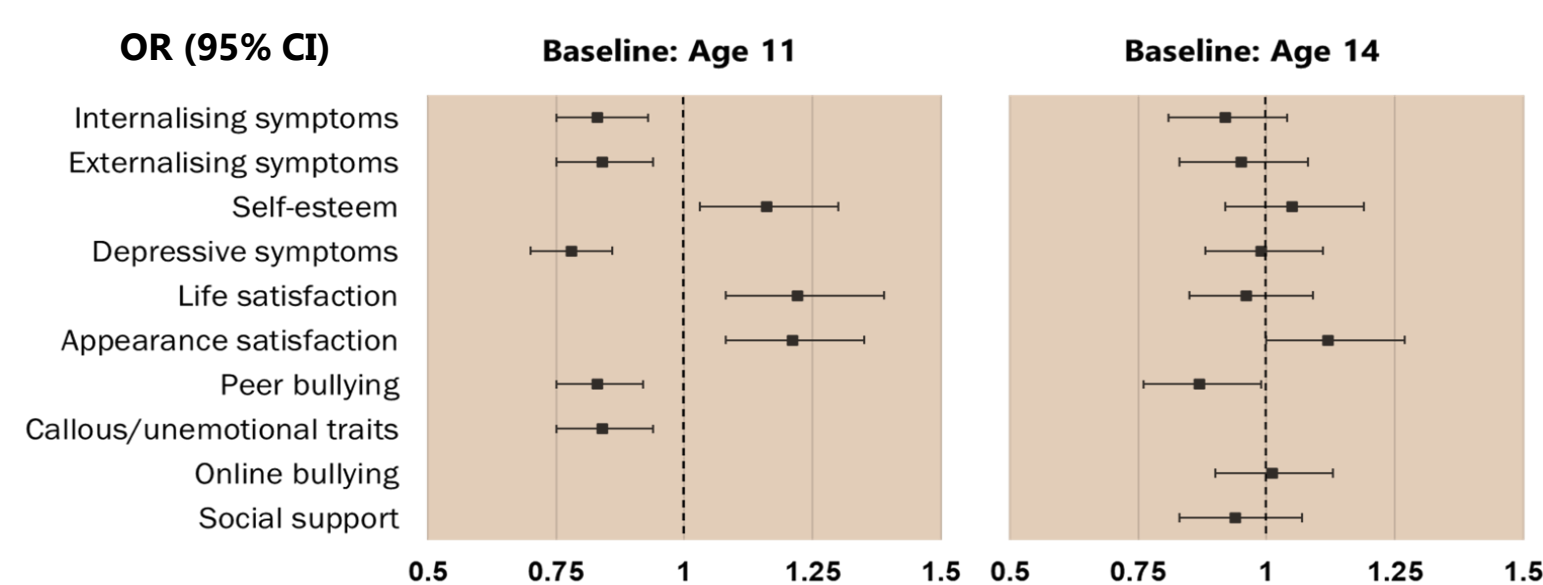
## RESULTS

HERE IS WHAT WE FOUND...

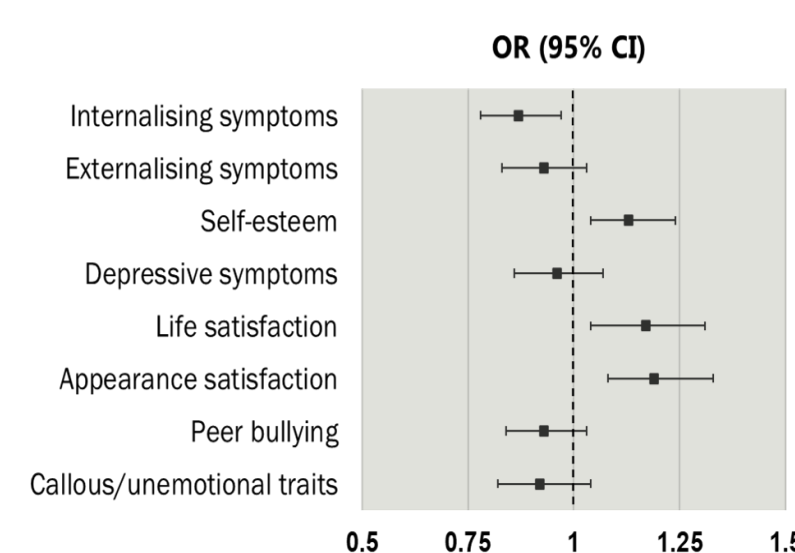
- ✓ Children with better mental health and psychosocial well-being at **age 11** were **16%** and **29%** more likely to return to healthy weight by age 17, respectively.
- ✓ Neither better mental health nor psychosocial well-being at **age 14** was associated with returning to healthy weight by age 17.
- ✓ Children with better psychosocial well-being at **age 11** were **20%** more likely to return to healthy weight by age 14.
- ✓ Better psychosocial well-being at **age 11** compared to age 14 had a stronger association with returning to healthy weight by age 17.

HERE IS WHAT WE FOUND...

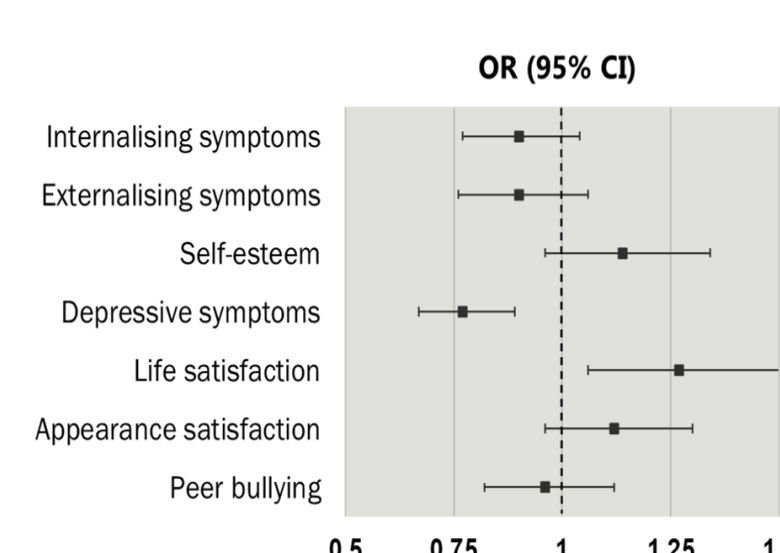
Individual psychological measures and returning to healthy weight by age 17



Individual psychological measures at age 11 and returning to healthy weight by age 14



Individual psychological measures at ages 11 (vs. 14) and returning to healthy weight by age 17



## IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

**Integrating psychological support** into current obesity prevention or weight loss strategies for children, particularly during **an age-specific sensitive period (age 11)**, may have greater and long-term benefits in **improving healthy weight** over time.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work received funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) (ES/V017594/1).

We are grateful to the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS), UCL Social Research Institute, for the use of these data and to the UK Data Service for making them available. However, neither CLS nor the UK Data Service bear any responsibility for the analysis or interpretation of these data.

## REFERENCES

1. NHS Digital. (2022). National Child Measurement Programme, England, 2021/22 school year.
2. Pongiglione B, Fitzsimons E. (2019). Overweight and obesity in childhood and adolescence: findings from the UK Millennium Cohort Study, up to age 14. *Longitudinal and Life Course Studies*, 10: 27-50.