

STANFORD UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

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MEDIA ADVISORY

REDUCING CHILDREN'S TV VIEWING PREVENTS EXCESS WEIGHT GAIN

STANFORD — A Stanford study of grade-school children found that reducing television viewing prevents weight gain. Children who completed a six-month classroom curriculum to reduce their TV and videotape viewing and video game playing gained significantly less body fat than a control group of their peers. The study is being published in the October 27 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, a special issue devoted to the problem of obesity.

The study of 192 third- and fourth-graders from two San Jose, Calif., elementary schools is the first experimental study to demonstrate a direct link between TV watching and body weight, said author **Thomas N. Robinson, MD**, assistant professor of pediatrics and medicine at Stanford University. "One of the things that makes this study unique was that it focused specifically on reducing TV, videotape and video game use without promoting any other activities as substitutes," Robinson said. "As a result, we were able to isolate the effects of these media alone." Robinson thinks this program is a promising population-wide approach to help prevent childhood obesity, a problem that has reached epidemic proportions.

MEDIA AVAILABILITY:

On October 21 and 22, Robinson will be available for interviews on this study and on the topic of obesity in children at (650) 723-5331 or Tom.Robinson@stanford.edu. Between October 24 and October 26, Robinson will be attending meetings in Bethesda, Md., and can be reached at the Bethesda Marriott, (301) 897-4000.

Stephen P. Fortmann, MD, associate professor of medicine, is available for interviews on obesity and cardiovascular risk in adults. He can be reached at (650) 723-6145, or at sfortmann@scrdp.stanford.edu.

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