

Jordan University of Science and Technology

Looking at school nurses? roles in tackling overweight and obesity

Authors: Mohammed ALBashtawy, associate professor, Community and Mental Health Department, Princess Salma Faculty of Nursing, AL al-Bayt University, Jordan

Abstract: School nurses work closely with schoolaged children and young people, parents, and teachers, providing support and advice on many health issues. They play a vital role in children?s growth and development (International Council of Nurses, 2006). School nurses are particularly well placed to take action to promote healthy behaviours, and to help school-aged children gain appropriate access to services to maintain or improve their health (International Council of Nurses, 2006; Miller et al, 2008). The roles and responsibilities of professional school nurses are increasingly shifting toward the area of health promotion, with particular emphasis on maintaining a healthy weight, due to the global obesity epidemic (Whitehead, 2009). School nurses have an ideal opportunity to enhance healthpromoting activities in order to reduce the risks of being overweight or obese (Whitehead, 2009; National Association of School Nurses, 2010). This review identifies the multi-faceted roles that can be practiced by the school nurse to prevent overweight and obesity among school-aged children. These roles include that of assessor, health educator, counsellor, referer, leader and researcher.