



**Feasibility trial of an obesity school-to-home intervention delivered by teachers to reduce sugar sweetened drinks consumption among 12–13-year-olds in secondary schools  
(Study Acronym: DISS - Diss Sugar Sweetened Drinks)**

Dear headteacher,

My name is Huda, and I am a Senior Clinical Lecturer in Dental Public Health at the Institute of Dentistry, Queen Mary University of London. I am also a Consultant in Public Health at NHS England and lead for child healthy weight. My research team and I have been funded to undertake research to maintain healthy weight and dental health in secondary schools in East London.

In East London, the prevalence of overweight and obesity among young people is higher than the national and London averages, putting Tower Hamlets and Newham in the top 5 boroughs in London for the highest rates. In England, 70% of young people (11–18-year-olds) consume sugar sweetened drinks (SSD) regularly which increases the risk of weight gain and tooth decay. This research addresses this public health problem locally.

The **aim** of the study is to explore approaches to reduce sugary drinks among young people and to promote healthy weight. Study participants include young people aged 12-13 years, PSHE/science teachers and parents.

We recognise how busy schools are and we will do our best to minimise any disruptions.

**Briefly, the study intervention consists of:**

- (1) upskilling PSHE/Science/PE teachers to deliver two sessions to year 8 children to support them with reducing the intake of sugary drinks. Teachers will be trained in Group Motivational Interviewing, which supports collaborative approaches to behaviour change,
- (2) a mobile app aimed at and co-developed by young people,
- (3) healthy eating resources for parents to support a healthy environment at home.

Schools will be randomly selected as control (delivery of PSHE/science class as normal) and intervention schools (where the above intervention will be tested for practicality and acceptability).

**What does the study involve?**

Once a school has agreed, it will be randomly selected to control or intervention schools. We would like to ask for your support in recruiting young people and their parents to the study. Young people who have consented to take part will have their height and weight measured alongside their waist circumference and will complete a diet and physical activity questionnaire at the start of the study. This will be repeated at the end of the study (at 6 months). We will also ask feedback from headteachers, teachers, young people and parents at the end of the study to explore whether it was feasible and acceptable.

**INTERVENTION SCHOOLS:**

- All year 8 young people will be involved in the classroom sessions irrespective of consent. This will ensure that all young people benefit from this activity.
- One or two PSHE or science/other teachers will be trained by the research team in Group Motivational Interviewing over 2 sessions convenient to the school.
- Teachers will be expected to deliver one session (45 minutes long) followed by a brief session of 20 minutes.
- Parents will be invited to attend a meeting to engage with them and promote healthy lifestyle behaviours. Parents will be hosted at the school, QMUL or online – depending on their preferences.

**CONTROL SCHOOLS:**

They will receive a PSHE resource pack from the PSHE association.

**Impacts of the study on participants and your school:**

- Teachers will be upskilled in a behaviour change method called Group Motivational Interviewing (please read below for more information about this approach).
- The training will support teachers in their professional development and encourage them in motivating young people towards positive behaviour change that can maximise their learning and support pastoral care.
- Young people and their parents will be supported in healthy eating and physical activity. This will help them maintain healthy weight and dental health. All participants will receive a certificate of participation from QMUL.
- Your school will receive vouchers for **£150**, teachers will receive **£30** and young people **£10**.
- The school will be offered dental students to be involved in career’s talk.

**Study timeline and school commitment:**

Year	2023			2024	
Months	November - January	January	February	June/July	
Action	School Recruitment process	Teachers, parents and young people (YP) recruitment	Baseline data collection & teacher’s training sessions	Intervention delivery	Follow-up data collection
School commitment	Short meeting with school staff to present study and agree to participate.	Emails for teachers and parents as well as posters will be provided.	- Data collection: teachers, YP and parent’s questionnaires and 1 hr for YP height and weight measurement  - Teachers’ training: 2 x 3 hr-sessions	2 classroom sessions delivered by the trained teacher: 1st 45 mins and 2 <sup>nd</sup> 20 mins	Data collection: teachers, YP and parent’s questionnaires; 1 hr for YP height and weight measurement; and 30 mins for two focus groups with teachers and YP.

### **Group Motivational Interviewing**

Group motivational interviewing (GMI) is a counselling approach that aims to promote behaviour change in a group setting (Miller and Rollnick, 2013). It consists of a facilitator guiding a group through a process of exploring their motivations and obstacles to change. The goal of GMI is to create a supportive, non-confrontational collaborative environment where group members can reflect on their behaviour and identify their own reasons for change (Hawkins et al., 2016).

We look forward to hearing from interested schools.

**If you would like to know more about the study, we would be very happy to organise a face-to-face or an online meeting.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

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