# "I thought I was normal"



Meanings of weight and bodies in Chilean children.



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### Outline



Introduction and context



Main Concepts Literature Review



Methods



Analysis



Findings



Preliminary Conclusions



### Introduction and Context

Chile: 19,458,310 inhabitants, **62.4% Metropolitan region**, where Santiago, Chile's capital, is situated.

Childhood population **20.1%, the lowest rate of childhood mortality** among Latin-American countries.

Neoliberal Economy, OECD country, Chile is one of Latin America's wealthiest countries but also one of its **most unequal.** 

Currently in a democratic referendum process for a New Constitution.





### Introduction and Context

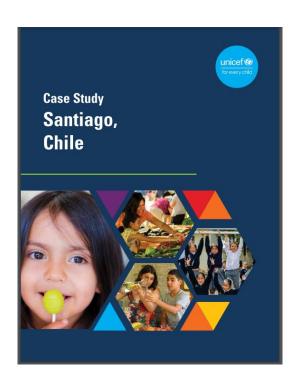
In Chile, 54.1% of children are classified as higher weight\*. However, there is **limited** understanding of children's experiences with weight and health-related practices and how these experiences might inform public health policy.





### Introduction and Context

Catastrophic (biomedical) discourses around the 'Obesity Epidemic' or the 'Burden of Obesity'



### Chile, an example of aggressive state intervention to combat the obesity epidemic



or Martin Juneau, M.D., FRCP

Cardiologue et Directeur de la prévention, Institut de Cardiologie de Montréal. Professeur titulaire de clinique, Faculté de médecine de l'Université de Montréal. / Cardiologist and Director of Prevention, Montreal Heart Institute. Clinical Professor, Faculty of Medicine, University of Montreal.

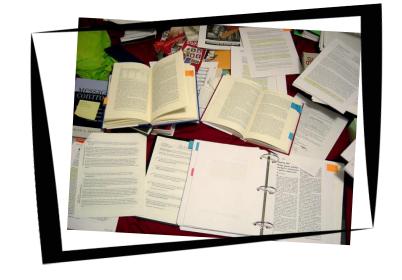
2 September 2020





### Main concepts – Literature Review

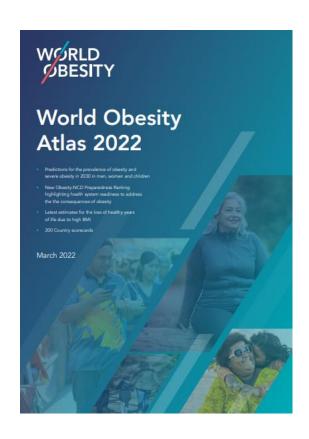
- "Obesity" as a Public Health Challenge
- Social Construction of Childhood Obesity
- Stigma and weight stigma
- Inequality and Intersectionality



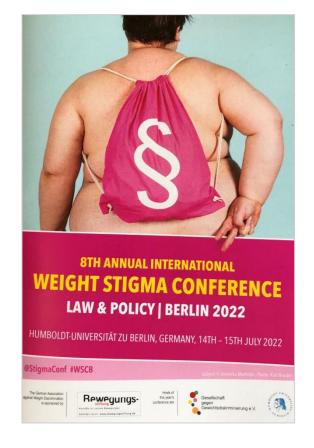
(OECD, 2017; WHO, 2018; UNICEF, 2019; Lupton, 2013; Guthman, 2011; Wright, 2009; Evans, 2006; Quirke, 2016; Sanders, 2014; Gard and Wright, 2005 Ebeling, 2014, Oliver, 2006; Goffman, 1963; Link and Phelan, 2001; Scambler, 2009; Puhl and Heuer, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; Hill Collins, 2016 Eisenmann et al., 2011; Herndon, 2010; Curtis et al., 2011; Boero, 2009)



# What's the Problem Represented to be? approach (Bacchi, 2013)









### Research Question

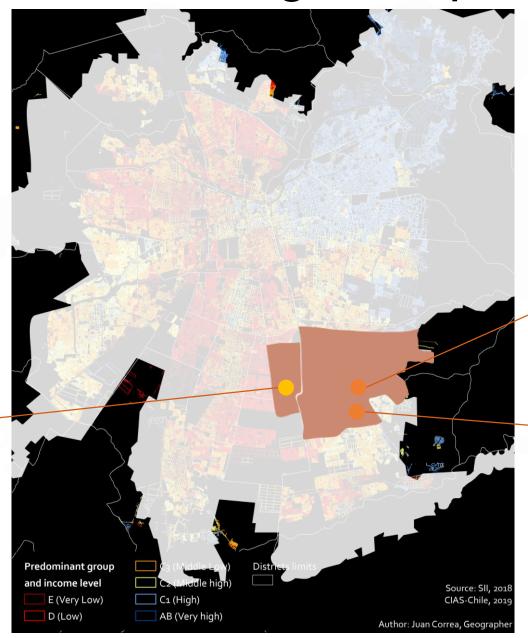
What are the meanings of health, growth and weight for "overweight and obese" children and their caregivers?

## Research Location: Santiago's deprived zones



La Pintana

ANCORA UC CLINIC



**Puente Alto** 

ANCORA UC CLINIC

ANCORA UC CLINIC



### Methods

- Qualitative interviews allow us to access children's narratives of bodies and health-related behaviours (Kelly, 2010).
- Interviews are an age-appropriate method to gain information (Christensen and James, 2008) in contrast to the adult-centred view which tends to think that children are incapable of maintaining attention during an interview (Punch, 2002).
- Interviews allow children to relate their experiences and beliefs verbally to an interviewer (Harden et al., 2000).
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), children's rights to participate in research.



### Methods - Participants

- I included children to avoid a mediated related experience through adults as other qualitative researchers have criticized (Bushin, 2007, Punch, 2002).
- I recognize children as **social agents of their process and societal changes**. This involves a move of children from objects to subjects of research as active actors in the construction of their experiences, health and life (Punch and Tisdall, 2012, Hunleth, 2011, Christensen and James, 2008, Metcalfe et al., 2008)





### Methods - Participants

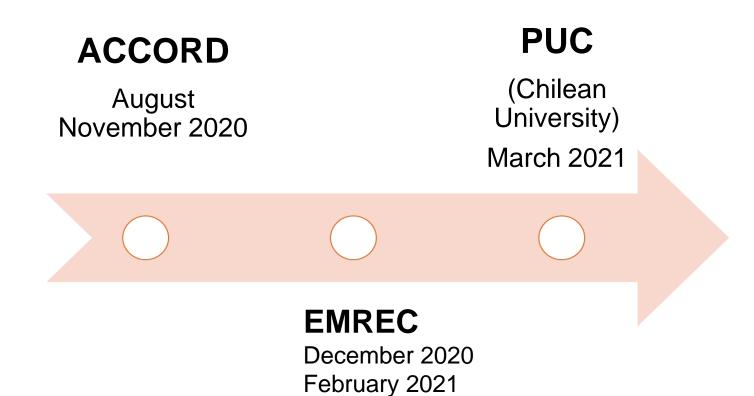
Doing qualitative interviews with children... present different ethical challenges:

- Awareness among researchers of the importance of ensuring an ethical research practice when doing research with children (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). This has led researchers to reflect on a number of ethical considerations when doing research with children.
- Ensuring children's confidentiality, protecting children from harm or abuse and balancing power relationships are three pillars of an ethical research (Alderson & Morrow, 2011).





## Methods – Ethics approval timeline 8 months





## Methods – Ethical challenges

### How to recruit children and where...

 Children 10-12 years old with a 'medical classification' (schools, clinics)

Covid 19 and the lockdowns ->
 Clinics 'ANCORA'





### Methods – Ethical challenges

### **ANCORA clinics:**

- Staff was agreed to help with this study. A GP, was the gatekeeper (3 ANCORA clinics). I met initially and remotely with the ANCORA staff in Santiago (including GP) to discuss the study and ensure they were aware of the aims and inclusion criteria.
- The ANCORA staff was key to communicating the study information to the children and their mother. The study was introduced to the child and mother by their GP or other health professional at ANCORA.



### Methods – Ethical challenges

### **Obtaining Contact Details**

- Children/mothers attended by the Clinic staff were invited:
- to complete an initial research contact form indicating their agreement to be contacted, along with details of a means of contact or
- ii) to receive an information pack and contact the researcher directly.
- Parents informed consent was required before children assent Challenge: Power negotiations Listen to children
- Challenge: Use of different Informed/Assent Forms Comprehensible language (Sanjari et al, 2014)



### Methods – Ethics – Participant Information



### Participant Information Sheet

Exploring narratives of body and weight related practices in children living with overweight or obesity and their caregivers.

You are invited to take part in a research study. To help you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish. Contact us if there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

### What is the purpose of the study?

This study seeks to explore experiences of children with overweight and obesity and their caregivers in Santiago. The findings of this study hope to contribute to recommendations for the interventions or policies for children with overweight/obesity in Chile.

### Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part in this study, because you are a Mother/Father/Caregiver of a child aged 10-12 years and the child has been diagnosed with overweight or obesity; speak Spanish, is Chilean or have been lived 5 years in Chile. We wish to ask you some questions about health-related practices and daily routines of you and your child.

### Do I have to take part?

No - it is entirely up to you. You have as much time as you want to decide if you would like to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Deciding not to take part or withdrawing from the study will not affect you in any way. If your child is receiving treatment or education, the regular care or service will not be affected as a result of your decision not to participate or to withdraw from the study.

### What will happen if I take part?

Once you and your child have consented to taking part in this study, you will be asked to provide your email address and/or contact number to schedule an online interview according to your preferences. You will be assigned a unique participant number by the researcher Cecilia Prieto, who use this number to de-identify your personal data. The interview will last around 60-90 minutes. The interview would involve a face to face interview with the researcher and can be conducted either at your home; or via online video-call. The interview will be audiorecorded only for the purpose of transcription. During the interview, the researcher will ask you questions about health-related practices (eating, exercising, sleeping) and daily routines of you and your child, body and growth using photos and Chilean videos.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?



You will be helping the researcher to better understand the meanings of health and body in children and how your daily routines impact on your experiences. This will help to recommend necessary support measures according to relevant health needs, as well as potential policy or interventions for overweight and obesity in children. As a compensation for your and your child's time and internet usage, a 4 pounds 'supermarket voucher' each will be given to you

### What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

Taking your time for one face to face or online interview. You don't need to go apywhere... because the interview will be at home or online. The interview will take around 60-90 minutes.

### What if there are any problems?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study please contact Cecilia Prieto Bravo on +55988344697 or email on: Cecilia Prieto@ed ac.uk or Jeni Harden jeni harden@ed ac.uk +44 (0)131 690 06991 or Linda Bauld linda hauld@ed ac.uk +44 (0)131 690 5213.

### What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study

Agreeing to participate in this project does not oblige you to remain in the study. If, at any stage, you no longer want to be part of the study, please tell me (Cecilia.Prie

Participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time. If you decide to withdraw, you will have the option of withdrawal from either

 All aspects of the study but continued use of the data collected up to that point All aspects of the study with removal of all previously collected data.

What happens when the study is finished?
The results of this study will be summarised in a University doctoral thesis, articles, reports and presentations. Quotes or key findings will always be made anonymous in any formal outputs and you will not be identified in any results from this study or any future publications or presentations relating to this research.

If you would like to be informed about the study findings, you will receive a summary of the results via email once the project is completed.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?



All the information I collect during the course of the research will be kept confidential and there are strict laws which safeguard your privacy at every stage. After finishing the study, all the audio recorded and transcriptions will be securely destroyed

How will we use information about you?

We will need to collect the following personal identifiable information from you for this research

- Full name
- Email address
- · Telephone number
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Educational level
- Marital status
- Occupation
- · Interview data (Views and experiences of body, growth, weight and health-related
- . Audio recordings of consent for participation in study for video call interviews.
- Audio recordings of interviews and de-identified interview transcripts.

The information collected from you in paper copies (i.e. consent forms) and the audio recordings will be stored in OneDrive, a secure and encrypted cloud storage service (and the University of Edinburgh's recommended storage service) and accessed via password protected desktops and an encrypted laptop and it will be kept for 5 years.

The data collected from your and your child's during the interviews will be assigned a unique code to de-identify the data and stored on OneDrive, a secure and encrypted cloud storage service (and the University of Edinburgh's recommended storage service) and accessed via password protected desktops and an encrypted laptop. The interview audio recordings will be transcribed by the Researcher and given a unique code to de-identify them. If any unwanted personal information is revealed accidentally during the interviews, it will be removed from the transcripts to maintain your confidentiality. Once transcribed, the audio recordings will be

Only de-identified data will be uploaded to the University of Edinburgh's DataStore, After 5 years, all paper records will be shredded and disposed of securely and electronic records will

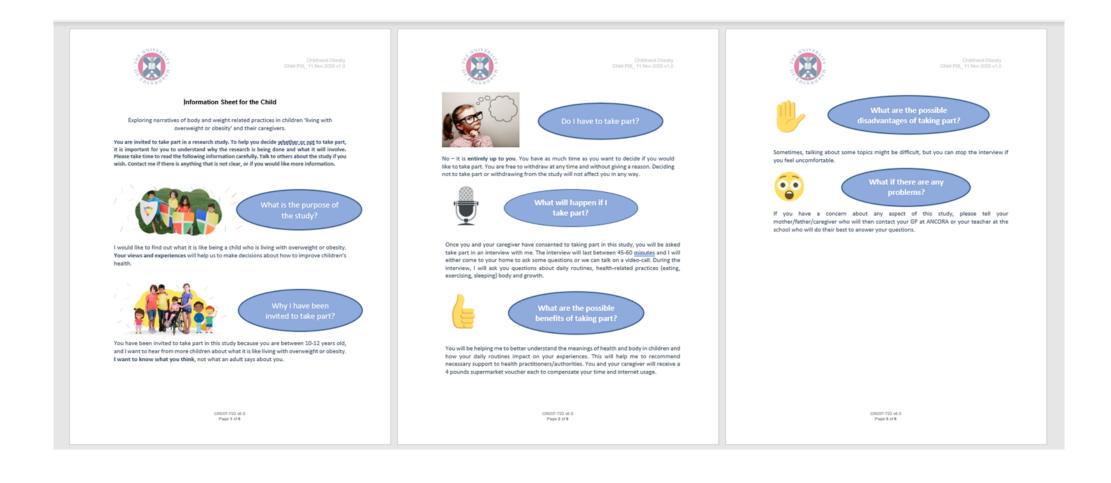
If you have any concerns about how we will use your child's information, please contact:

- . The University of Edinburgh Data Protection Officer: dpo@ed.ac.uk
- Send an email to <u>Cecilia.Prieto@ed.ac.uk</u>
- Ring the researcher on +56988844697

What will happen to the results of the study?



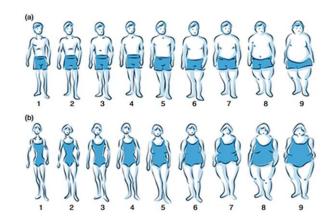
## Methods – Ethics – Participant Information

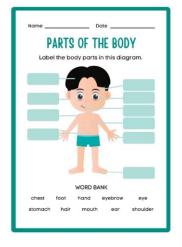


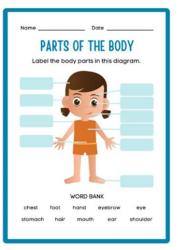


### Methods - Participants

- Qualitative Study
- Conducted during lockdown 2021
- 34 online semi-structured interviews were conducted with children between 10-12 years classified as 'overweight' or 'obese' at ANCORA UC (N=18) clinics and their mothers (N=16).
- Topic Guides (children & mothers)
   Images were used as prompts.



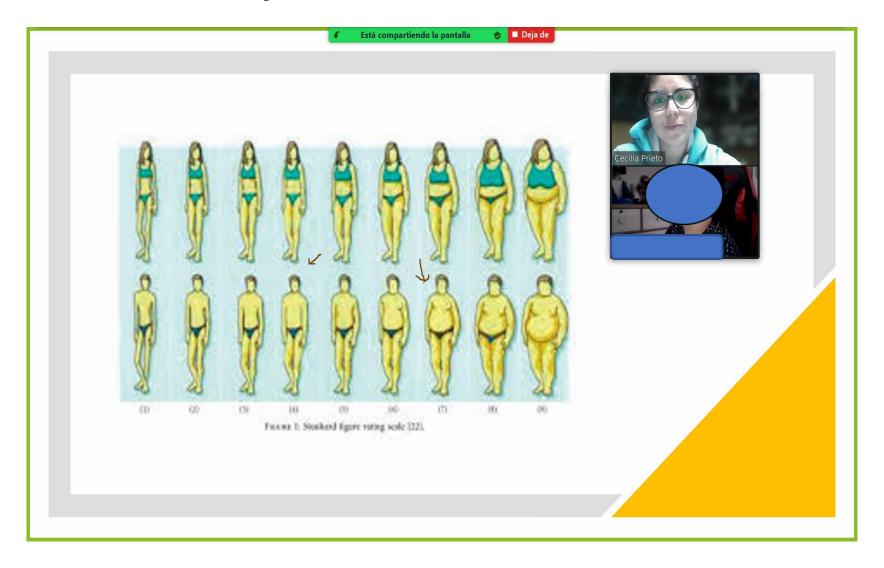




Body images from the website (Canvas) and Silhouettes (Sørensen, T.I.A. and Stunkard, A.J., 1993), from which children picked the one that best represented themselves and another that represented the 'ideal' body for them.



# Methods - Participants



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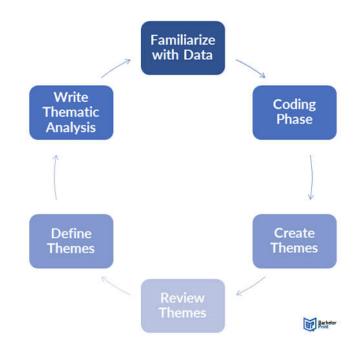
## Methods: Table of participants

						Age (10-	Gender (male-	Medical	
N°	Mother	Age	Occupation	N°	Children	12)	female)	Classification	Place of living
1	Teresa	30	Housewife	1	Santiago	10	Male	Obese	Puente Alto
2	Dalia	32	Social worker	2	Horacio	10	Male	Overweight	Puente Alto
3	Pamela	41	Part time cashier	3	Fernanda	11	Female	Overweight	La Pintana
4	Claudia	44	Dental assistant	4	Mateo	11	Male	Overweight	Puente Alto
				5	Andrea	12	Female	Overweight	Puente Alto
5	Doris	36	Housewife	6	David	12	Male	Obese	Puente Alto
6	Paty	20	Part time worker	7	Carlos	11	Male	Obese	La Pintana
7	Gloria	40	Dog hairdresser's	8	Javi	12	Female	Obese	Puente Alto
8	Gaby	43	Therapist	9	Marcela	12	Female	Obese	Puente Alto
9	Amelia	28	Toll cashier	10	Katherine	12	Female	Obese	La Pintana
10	Amparo	30	Housewife	11	Amelia	11	Female	Overweight	Puente Alto
11	Josefina	43	Housewife	12	Victor	11	Male	Obese	La Pintana
12	Bea	31	Housewife	13	Edson	11	Male	Obese	Puente Alto
13	Sofia	29	Housewife	14	Isa	11	Female	Obese	Puente Alto
14	Belen	47	Housewife	15	Flor	11	Female	Overweight	Puente Alto
15	Javiera	31	Housewife	16	Macarena	11	Female	Obese	Puente Alto
16	Ana	46	Accountant	17	Abi	11	Female	Overweight	Puente Alto
				18	Beto	10	Male	Overweight	Puente Alto

# Analysis: Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022)

 "Method for developing, analysing and interpreting patterns across a qualitative dataset, which involves systematic processes of data coding to develop themes"

• Recognising "a reflexive researcher".







# Findings: 1) Weight stigma and language

• Weight Stigma & language

The language used by children to describe their bodies differed from those given by the clinicians using medical terminology ('overweight'/'obese'). None of them described themselves as 'obese'.

Mateo: I'm a little chubby (male, aged 11)

Carlos: Sometimes I've seen 10 years old who are very little (...) and next to them I'm bigger (male, aged 11)







## Findings: 2) Being (over)weight' = Being (un)healthy

The thinnest shape was explicitly associated with being healthy. Most children felt unhealthy only because of their large bodies.

Horacio: I'm unhealthy because I'm a little fat (male, aged 10)

Katherine: I don't feel healthy because I'm very fat (female, aged 12)



# Findings: 3) Medicalisation as triggering ideas of abnormality and risk

Some of the children's accounts show they thought they were normal until a health professional told them that they need to lose weight.

Andrea: They measured me, and weighed me... and in a notebook, they [health professionals] have standards: overweight, normal,... less than overweight... and under weight... they saw my height and my weight, my mass. And then I saw that I was a little overweight.

Cecilia: And how did you feel when they told you that you were overweight?

Andrea: Like... I hadn't realized it because I thought I was normal." (aged 12, overweight)









# Findings: 4) Weight Stigma & body image



Weight Stigma and body image

Cecilia: Mm-Hmm, and if we now look at your chest, what emotion would you put on it?

Carlos: Eh, sad (changes the tone of voice)

Cecilia: sad, and why does the chest make you sad?

Carlos: is that there I have like... a lot of chest... like that a lot. (male, aged 11)



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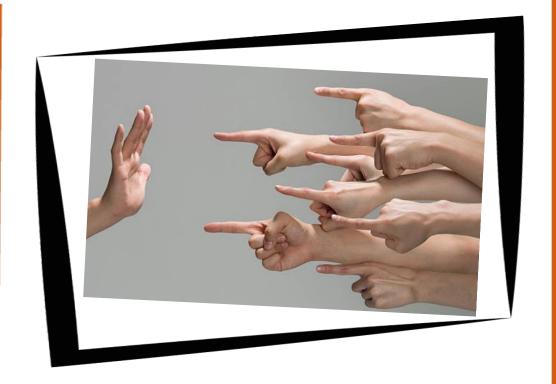
# Findings: 4) Weight Stigma & bullying

Weight Stigma & direct stigma

Santiago: My mom sometimes calls me fat because she's angry' (male, aged 10)

Paty: Sometimes the cousins annoy him [her son], or sometimes the same adults make jokes like "oh, you're fat", and he doesn't like that.

And... "hey, your son is big, he's chubby," things like that (...) And I've also had like... erm differences with people because I've told them: please save the comments... eh if you think he's big, fine, but don't comment on his body, please. (Paty, Mother)







### Li

# Findings: 4) Weight Stigma & bullying

Indirect weight stigma & power imbalance

Fernanda: "(...) sometimes when we played the family role... as I was the largest... they always made me play the mother, with another partner who they didn't want him to play... and the rest were all that they wanted to be, but they forced me to do what they wanted me to do." (female, aged 11)

Internalised stigma

David: (nervous laugh) that, for example, eh... I'm walking quietly down the street, and people call me fat. I think, they call me ehm... fat because... I don't know why I think so, but I think it's because I disgust them. Because they don't want to be next to me or something (male, aged 12)







# Findings: 5) The mothers and the associated weight stigma

 Failure and the "associated stigma" mothers' experiences of having a child diagnosed with overweight or obesity

Dalia: frustrating (emphasis) frustrating, yes. I never thought that a son... because... eh... like chubby children are not healthy for me... no... something is wrong there. So arriving with my son for that issue was like... I don't know if I was a failure as a mom, but... but... I was doing something wrong as a mom. Well, and his dad. But... but... we understand that something is not being done well... (Dalia, mother)





# Preliminary Conclusions:

- Children did not describe themselves with medical labels ('overweight' and 'obese'). The
  weight stigma associated with those labels made them feel ashamed.
- Medicalised notions of being 'overweight' and 'obese' might contribute with the sense of 'abnormality'.
- Children feel highly stigmatised by their weight and individually responsible for this
  overweight condition. Stigmatisation is experienced also by mothers.

 These findings might explain the unintended consequences of current Chilean policies to reduce 'overweight' and 'obesity' in children, without improving health outcomes.



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