

CMC hosts dance contest to combat childhood obesity

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IN a bid to create awareness on the health hazards of excessive use of electronic gadgets, the Department of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism of the Christian Medical College (CMC) is conducting a dance competition for school and college students at Darling Residency Hotel here on Saturday. The organisers have centered the theme on 'Electronic gadgets can cause obesity' for the contest.

According to the department head Dr Nihal Thomas, childhood obesity is a serious public health problem that increases morbidity, mortality and has substantial long term economic and social costs.

"The obesity rate among the

Indian kids and youth has increased manifold in the last quarter century. Approximately, 20 per cent of our youth are now overweight with obesity rate of pre-school age children increasing at an alarming speed. Nowadays, even kids at the tender age of 2 are exposed to electronic devices," he said.

Citing a US survey, according to which kids spend 7 hours on an average on the electronic device every day, Dr Nihal said parents encourage the children to use them while travelling and feeding so as to keep them engaged.

"The time spent on the devices may curb outdoor activities. When children play violent games for a longer period of time, they tend to become more aggressive. They are more prone

to confront their teachers, peers, and relatives. They may have difficulty concentrating on their studies. Excessive computer exposure can be addictive. This can lead to a sedentary lifestyle, poor health, time mismanagement, and unhealthy eating habits, thus having an adverse impact on their physical and psychological development," he explained.

With schools and colleges playing a pivotal role in developing a sustained challenge to the growing epidemic of obesity and diabetes, teaching the kids healthy lifestyle practices, such as the value of healthy food habit, physical exercise and cutting down on watching TV, through a well structured school programme can have huge social relevance, Dr Nihal suggested.

