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Parental Perceptions and Key Determinants of Sedentary Behaviour in children aged 2-11 years old.

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Purpose: Engaging in sedentary activities often happens within the home environment where the family setting can determine the type and amount of sedentary behaviour that occurs. Parents are often viewed as the ‘gatekeepers’ of the time their children spend engaging in sedentary activities at home (e.g., TV viewing, electronic media use, physical activity, homework and social pursuits). There is limited evidence examining sedentary behaviours within a family setting, specifically in children aged 2-11 years, and qualitative studies are particularly absent. The purpose of this study was to explore parents’ understanding of sedentary behaviour, their perceived influence on their children’s sedentary behaviours at home and the key determinants of sedentary behaviour within a family setting. **Methods:** Nineteen parents (4M, 15F; mean age = 37.3 ± 4.4 years) of children (15M, 4F; mean age = 6.6 ± 3.7 years) participated in either face-to-face or telephone interviews which lasted between 9-24 minutes. Inductive content analysis was used to identify overall themes and the researchers employed several methods of trustworthiness during the data analysis process. **Results:** Three overall themes and eight first-order themes emerged from the interviews in relation to sedentary behaviours within the family setting. Findings indicated that parents, particularly mothers, are the gatekeepers to the prevalence and types of sedentary behaviours that children engage in at home. Role modelling, reinforcement and rules and restrictions influence the type of sedentary activities of children, particularly electronic media use, within the home. **Conclusions:** Interventions to reduce sedentary behaviour in children should adopt a whole-family approach to modify the existing strategies already enforced by parents to ensure effectiveness. Specifically, identifying mothers’ perceived barriers and facilitators to decreasing TV viewing and electronic media use within the home and educating older siblings on the benefits of engaging in non-sedentary activities at home could have a positive effect on younger siblings within the family setting.