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## Observation of Family Functioning at Mealtime: A Comparison Between Families of Children With and Without Overweight

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## ▶ Abstract

**Objective** To examine differences between families of children with and without overweight on parental control and support. **Methods** Twenty-eight families with an overweight child and a control group of 28 families with a normal weight child (age range 7–13 years) participated in the study. Observations and self-reports of mealtime family functioning were administered and analyzed. **Results** Parents of children with overweight reported to exert more control on their children's feeding behavior and an equal amount of parental support in comparison with parents of children without overweight. However, observations at mealtime indicated that in families with an overweight child, maladaptive control strategies were twice as prevalent, and less parental support was displayed. **Conclusions** Self-reports and observations provide complementary information on how parents interact with their overweight children. Family-based treatment programs should include discussions on the adequate amount of parental control and support.

**Key words:** family functioning; observation; overweight in children.

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