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Association of Obesity with Food Habits and Body Image in School Children of Nakhon Pathom Province, Thailand

AM Alavi Naini, M Amini, M Karajibani, AL Khalilian, S Nourisaedloo, M Salimi, KH Shafaghi, J Yhung-aree

Abstract:

In order to assess the relationship between obesity with food habit and body image, this case control study was conducted among 85 urban primary school children male and female aged 10-12 years old, attending Anuban School in Nakhon Pathom Province, in Thailand. Two different questionnaires were used for data collection for caregivers and students. The standard used for definition of overweight and obesity was body mass index [BMI]. Obesity was defined as percentile ≥ 95 th of the sex-specific BMI-for-age growth chart, CDC. Obese children commonly (> 4 times per week) ate blanched /steamed foods as well as spicy foods. While sugar consumption was the same between the two groups, oil consumption was higher among the obese group. Compared with control children, obese children had more snacks before breakfast as well as during lunch and dinner on weekdays and weekends. Normal students had more foods- except for leafy vegetable and fried BBQ snacks. Two-thirds of the children knew about the food groups, but only one-third of them could classify foods into the food groups. Obese children knew about the food groups and could classify foods better than the way normal children could. Children gained information about foods from their parents, teachers, sisters, books, and television. Most of obese children knew they were obese, and they were not happy with their status. In conclusion, Programs must be designed to improve nutrition and in this way, parents and /or caregivers must be involved.

Keywords:

Schoolchildren . Food habits . Thailand

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