

Selected nutritional behaviors and physical activity among elementary school children

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A- Conception and study design; **B** - Collection of data; **C** - Data analysis; **D** - Writing the paper; **E**- Review article; **F** - Approval of the final version of the article; **G** - Other (please specify)

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Proper nutrition and physical activity are very important elements in the proper functioning and development of children. The lack of daily, systematic physical effort in younger and younger age groups is a public health problem.

Purpose: To evaluate the nutrition and physical activity of children attending primary school.

Materials and methods: The study was conducted among 707 pupils from randomly selected elementary schools using the authors' own questionnaire in the school year 2013/2014. The questionnaire included questions on selected dietary habits and physical activity as well as the socio-economic conditions of the families.

Results: Among the studied children, 88.6% consumed 4 or 5 meals a day. There was a statistically significant relationship between the number of meals consumed and the age of the

children. Breakfast was consumed by 86.4% of children, more often residents of the city than the village (88.0% vs. 81.7%, $p < 0.05$). Daily consumption of second breakfast was declared by 71.5% of boys and 74.2% of girls. The vast majority of the studied students (86.8%) have always taken part in physical education classes. Outdoor leisure time was declared by 75% of the surveyed children. Rural students showed greater involvement in outdoor activities than students from the city (86.1% vs. 70.2%, $p < 0.001$). A total of 62.2% of boys and 51.8% of girls ($p < 0.05$) participated in sports activities.

Conclusions: Inappropriate nutrition and lack of physical activity affected both girls and boys, and the abnormalities were dependent on where they lived and were age-related.

Keywords: Nutrition, physical activity, children

DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0010.1865