

Nutritional Status and Body Image Perception among Thai Adolescents

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Abstract : Body image plays an important role in adolescents. Thai adolescents put high concern on their body image result in unsatisfied their body shapes. Therefore, inappropriate weight management methods have been used. This study examined the body image perception and the nutritional status of Thai adolescents. Body mass index screening was done on 181 nursing students of Ramathibodi School of Nursing to categorized obesity, overweight, normal weight and underweight respondents by using recommended body-mass index (BMI) cut-off points for Asian populations. Self report questionnaire on demographics and body image perception were completed. Results showed that the respondents were mainly female (93.4%) and their mean age were 19.2 years. The prevalence of obesity, overweight, normal weight and underweight of the nursing students were 5.5%, 7.2%, 55.2% and 32.0%, respectively. Of all the respondents, 57.5% correctly perceived themselves, with 37.0% overestimating and 5.5% underestimating their weight status. Of those in the obesity category, 20.0% correctly perceived themselves and 80.0% perceived themselves as overweight. For overweight category, total respondents correctly perceived themselves. Fifty two percent of the normal weight respondents perceived themselves as overweight and 2.0% perceived themselves as obesity. Of the underweight respondents, 77.6% correctly perceived themselves and 20.7% perceived themselves as normal weight. These findings show high occurrence of body image misperception among Thai adolescents. Being concerned with this situation can promote adolescents for healthy weight and practice appropriate weight management methods.

Keywords : nutritional status, body image perception, Thai adolescents, body-mass index (BMI)

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