

Obesity and Lifestyle of Students in Roumanian Southeastern Region

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Abstract : Obesity is involved in the etiology or acceleration of progression of important non-communicable diseases, such as: metabolic, cardiovascular, rheumatological, oncological and depression. It is a need to prevent the obesity occurrence, like a key link in disease management. From this point of view, the best approach is to early educate youngsters upon the need for a healthy nutrition lifestyle associated with constant physical activities. The objective of the study was to assess correlations between weight condition, physical activities and food preferences of students from South East Romania. Questionnaires were applied on high school students in Galati: 1006 girls and 880 boys, aged between 14 and 19 years (being approved by Local School Inspectorate and the Ethics Committee of the 'Dunarea de Jos' University of Galati). The collected answers have been statistically processed by using the multivariate regression method (PLS2) by Unscramble X program (Camo, Norway). Multiple variables such as age group, body mass index, nutritional habits and physical activities were separately analysed, depending on gender and general mathematical models were proposed to explain the obesity trend at an early age. The study results show that overweight and obesity are present in less than a fifth of the adolescents who were surveyed. With a very small variation and a strong correlation of over 86% for 99% of the cases, a general preference for sweet foods, nocturnal eating associated with computer work and a reduced period of physical activity is noticed for girls. In addition, the overweight girls consume sweet juices and alcohol, although a percentage of them also practice the gym. There is also a percentage of the normoponderal girls that consume high caloric foods which predispose this group to turn into overweight cases in time. Within the studied group, statistics for the boys show a positive correlation of almost 87% for over 96% of cases. They prefer high calories foods, fast food, and sweet juices, and perform medium physical activities. Both overweight and underweight boys are more sedentary. Over 15% of girls and over a quarter of boys consume alcohol. All these bad eating habits seem to increase with age, for both sexes. To conclude, obesity and overweight assessed in adolescents in S-E Romania reveal nonsignificant percentage differences between boys and girls. However, young people in this area of the country are sedentary in general; a significant percentage prefers sweets / sweet juices / fast-food and practice computer nourishing. The authors consider that at this age, it is very useful to adapt nutritional education by new methods of food processing and market supply. This would require an early understanding of the difference among foods and nutrients and the benefits of physical activities integrated into the healthy current lifestyle, as a measure for preventing and managing non-communicable chronic diseases related to nutritional errors and sedentarism. Acknowledgment— This study has been partial founded by the Francophone University Agency, Project Réseau régional dans le domaine de la santé, la nutrition et la sécurité alimentaire (SaIN), no.21899/06.09.2017.

Keywords : adolescents, body mass index, nutritional habits, obesity, physical activity

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