

Prevalence and Associated Factors of Overweight and Obesity in Children with Intellectual Disability: A Cross-Sectional Study among Chinese Children

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Abstract : Objectives: Intellectual disability (ID) ranks among the top 20 most costly disorders. A child with ID creates a wide set of challenges to the individual, family, and society, and overweight and obesity aggravate those challenges. People with ID have the right to attain optimal health like the rest of the population. They should be given priority to eliminate existing health inequities. Childhood obesity epidemic and associated factors among children, in general, has been well documented, while knowledge about overweight and obesity in children with ID is scarce. Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among 524 Chinese children with ID (males: 68.9%, mean age: 12.2 years) in Hong Kong in 2015. Children's height and weight were measured at school. Parents, in the presence of their children, completed a self-administered questionnaire at home about the children's physical activity (PA), eating habits, and sleep duration in a typical week as well as parenting practices regarding children's eating and PA, and their socio-demographic characteristics. Multivariate logistic regression estimated the potential risk factors for children being overweight. Results: The prevalence of overweight and obesity in children with ID was 31.3%, which was higher than their general counterparts (18.7%-19.9%). Multivariate analyses revealed that the risk factors of overweight and obese in children with ID included: comorbidity with autism, the maternal side being overweight or obese, parenting practices with less pressure to eat more, children having shorter sleep duration, longer periods of sedentary behavior, and higher intake frequencies of sweetened food, fried food, and meats, fish, and eggs. Children born in other places, having snacks more frequently, and having irregular meals were also more likely to be overweight or obese, with marginal significance. Conclusions: Children with ID are more vulnerable to being overweight or obese than their typically developing counterparts. Identified risk factors in this study highlight a multifaceted approach to the involvement of parents as well as the modification of some children's questionable behaviors to help them achieve a healthy weight.

Keywords : prevalence, risk factors, obesity, children with disability

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