

Obesity in School Children: Methodological Issues

We read with interest about the study on obesity among school children [1]. Considering increasing burden of non-communicable diseases, the authors put forward a timely approach to primary prevention. However, certain issues need clarification:

1. It is not clear how the children were chosen. Number of schools, and classes from where students were sampled also need mention. Was any sampling technique followed?
2. Although children were categorized into undernourished, normal and obese, the first group is nowhere reflected in the results. Were the undernourished children included into non-obese group? As we are facing double burden of nutrition (under- and over-nutrition), mentioning percentage of malnourished would be helpful in comparing both extremes of the problem.
3. Physical activity of the students and measurement of C-reactive protein, although mentioned in methodology, are absent in result section.
4. It is not clear why only 66 children (3.9%) were chosen for laboratory testing whereas the prevalence of obesity was 9.3%?

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REFERENCE

1. Shamim A, Mohanty NC, Madan N. Obesity and its complications among suburban school children. *Indian Pediatr.* 2015;52:619.

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Some of the methodological details and results of the study were not mentioned because of the word limit for this category of article. The pointwise clarification for the issues are as follows:

1. Children in the age group of 5 to 15 years studying in the government schools from 1st to 10th standard were called along with their school teachers/parents to the pediatric outpatient department as a part of periodic school health check-up program. A sample size of 1600 students was calculated to provide sufficient statistical power (>80%) at the 5% significance level. Students were examined class- and section-wise in groups of 30 on pre-decided days in arrangement with the respective class teachers.
2. 36.5% of children were undernourished with almost equal prevalence in both males and females.
3. The mean durations of physical activity in a day were 95 minutes, 93 minutes and 92 minutes in obese, normal and undernourished children, respectively. C-reactive protein was not raised in any in the study.
4. Obese children were called back with their parents for investigations. However, only 80 parents reported back with their children, and 14 refused to get their children investigated. Thus, 66 children were eventually investigated, after obtaining a written informed consent from the parents.

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