Abstract

Aim: to study the association between the dietary habits and behavioural factors with the increased risk of obesity amongst adolescents in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). Method: A cross-sectional study was carried out among 661 adolescents (324 boys and 337 girls) aged 12 to 17 years selected by means of a multistage stratified random sampling technique. Results: The highest percentage of obesity was observed at 14 years of age in boys (30.5%) and at 13 years of age in girls (35.4%). There was a significant association between the frequency of eating breakfast ($P = 0.048$), snacking between breakfast and lunch ($P = 0.044$), and obesity in girls but not in boys. A high risk of obesity was associated with eating breakfast at school in both boys (OR = 3.0; CI 1.1-8.3) and girls (OR = 3.4; CI 1.6-7.4). Fast foods showed a significant association with obesity in girls ($P = 0.007$), but not in boys ($P = 0.745$). The risk of obesity was higher in boys who ate fast foods at home (OR = 1.3; CI 0.5-3.2) but less in girls (OR = 0.2; CI 0.1-1.0). Conclusion: Intervention programs focused on promoting changes in lifestyles, food habits and increasing physical activity need to be implemented at the earliest.

Keywords

Adolescents, Diet, Lifestyle, Dubai.