Abstract

Objective: To assess the association of maternal migration to Baja California, body mass index (BMI) status, children’s perceived food insecurity, and childhood lifestyle behaviors with overweight (BMI > 85% ile), obesity (BMI > 95% ile) and abdominal obesity (Waist Circumference > 90% ile). Methods: Convenience sampling methods were used to recruit a cross-sectional sample of 4th, 5th and 6th grade children and their parents at Tijuana and Tecate Public Schools. Children’s and parents’ weights and heights were measured. Children were considered to have migrant parents if parents were not born in Baja California. Results: One hundred and twenty-two children and their parents were recruited. The mean age of the children was 10.1 ± 1.0 years. Forty nine per cent of children were overweight or obese. Children with obese parents (BMI > 30) had greater odds of being obese, Odds Ratio (OR) = 4.9 (95% Confidence Interval (CI), 1.2-19, p = 0.03). Children with migrant parents had greater odds of being obese, OR = 3.7 (95% CI, 1.6-8.3, p = 0.01) and of having abdominal obesity, OR = 3.2 (95% CI, 1.4-7.1, p = 0.01). Children from migrant parents have greater risk of higher consumption of potato chips, OR = 8.0 (95% CI, 2.1 -29.1, p = 0.01). Children from non-migrant parents had greater odds of being at risk of hunger. Conclusions: Parental obesity and migration are associated with increased risk of obesity among Mexican children. Children whose parents were born in Baja California have greater odds of being at risk of hunger. Further studies should evaluate the role of migration on risk for childhood obesity.

Keywords

Childhood, Obesity, Migration, Food intake, Hunger.