Abstract

Introduction & aims: The identification of determinants of childhood overweight is crucial to early diagnosis and prevention. The aim of this study was to assess perinatal and parental related risk factors concerning children for having excessive body weight.

Methods: Cross-sectional study involving 3,101 children participating in the programme “Alimenta su salud” conducted in Castilla-La Mancha (Spain). Anthropometric and sociodemographic data were obtained from a general questionnaire. Analysed factors as potential predictors of childhood overweight were sex, age, birth weight, infant feeding, number of siblings, as well as parental marital status, educational level and obesity. Prevalence of overweight stratified by potential determinants was assessed. Univariate and multivariate logistic regression analyses were used to examine the associations between variables and the likelihood of being overweight. Results: The overweight prevalence (including obesity) was 30.3% in boys and 28.3% in girls, according to the IOTF criteria. Higher rates in younger subjects and some gender differences were observed. Parental obesity was the most important predictive variable for childhood overweight in both sexes and birth weight over 3,500 g in girls (OR 1.8, 95% CI 1.3-2.3). Having one or more siblings (OR 0.7, 95% CI 0.5-0.9) and higher paternal education (OR 0.8, 95% CI 0.6-0.9) in boys, and older age in girls (OR 0.7, 95% CI 0.5-0.9), resulted protective factors against childhood overweight. No independent effects of marital status, maternal education and infant feeding patterns on childhood excess weight were identified. Conclusions: Perinatal and parental factors could contribute to predict the risk of being overweight/obese in children aged 6 to 12 years, which should be considered when formulating obesity prevention and intervention strategies, stressing the importance of targeting obese parents with young children.

Keywords

Overweight, Obesity, Determinants, Children.