Abstract

Objective: To determine the prevalence of overweight and obesity among adolescents in five Arab countries, relative to age and sex. Methods: A multistage stratified random sampling technique was used to select the secondary school students from five Arab countries (Kuwait, Libya, Palestine, Syria and United Arab Emirates). The total sample was 3,302 (1,584 males, 1,718 females). Weight and height were measured, and body mass index was used to calculate the proportion of overweight and obesity based on the International Obesity Task Force standard (IOTF). Results: Kuwaiti adolescents showed the highest prevalence of overweight and obesity among both males and females, compared to their counterparts in other countries. There was no trend in the proportion of overweight and obesity by age in any of the countries included in the study. Conclusion: Adolescent obesity has reached a critical level in the Arab countries. Therefore there is an urgent need to establish programs to prevent and control obesity among schoolchildren in these countries.

Keywords
Adolescents, Arab, Overweight, Obesity.