Abstract

Introduction: Socioeconomical status may indirectly affect the obesity prevalence. This study gathers together dietary behaviour, physical activity and sedentary lifestyle in relation to the family socioeconomic status in a sample of Spanish children. Design: Population-based cross-sectional study of 3-16 years children. Methods: Questionnaires about dietary behaviors, physical activity and sedentary lifestyles, and direct anthropometric measures. Criteria of physical activity recommended was >5METs (metabolic equivalence) during 60 min/day, and sedentary lifestyle as 120 min/day of sedentary activities, using obesity criteria from the ENKID study. We derived a single “family socioeconomic level” indicator (FSEL) from the level of studies, professional category and work situation of both parents. Results: 1620 children were studied. 59.5% met the physical activity recommendations. Boys with the higher FSEL quartile tend to do more physical activity. In girls, physical activity increases with the age and degree of overweight. 57.7% of boys and 48.1% of girls were found to be sedentary, with a lower rate in families with higher FSEL. Higher FSEL quartile was related to healthy dietary habits such as having breakfast, 5 meals per day and less snacking. The FSEL was related also to the consumption of whole grains, dairy products and fruits, but not to vegetables, meat or fish. The greatest risk of excess weight was found in girls >6 years old, with a low FSEL, sedentary habits, that snack frequently and eat few proteins. Discussion: Family socioeconomic status seems to determine the level of physical activity, sedentary lifestyle and dietary behavior. The elaboration of a simple socioeconomic indicator may be useful to study factors involved in child obesity.

Keywords

Adolescent, Child, Health behavior, Obesity, Overweight, Social class.