Abstract
Introduction: The Mediterranean diet is recognized as one with the healthiest dietary patterns; however, this diet is deteriorating and being abandoned even in the Mediterranean countries themselves. Generally speaking, dietary habits get fixed during adolescence although during the college phase, students may experience important changes in their lifestyles. The KIDMED index is recognized as a good tool to assess adherence to the Mediterranean diet (AMD). Objective: The aim of this study was to assess AMD in college students and to evidence possible variations throughout the college period assessing differences between the college years. Method: A cross-sectional study with 213 alumni in first grade and 105 in fourth grade was carried out. The students were classified by gender, type of residence (parents’ home or out of the parents’ house) and body mass index (BMI) (< 25 or > 25). Results: The BMI for the whole sample was 24.35 ± 2.71 in men and 22.54 ± 3.25 in women (p < 0.001). The mean score in AMD was 7.0 ± 1.9, with 43% of the students showing good adherence. In general, a low intake of fruits, vegetables, rice or pasta was observed, foods that are included in the base of the dietary pyramid. Consumption of olive oil and legumes was very high and a direct relationship was observed between overweighted people (BMI > 25) and the habit of not having breakfast usually. No significant differences were observed between the student of first and fourth grades although those students in the fourth grade living away from the parental house had higher AMD level than the other students (p < 0.001). Conclusions: Educational programs promoting the intake of the different groups of food are recommended, was well as strategies promoting the consumption of fruits and vegetables within the university area and the healthy habit of having breakfast.

Keywords