Objective: To determine the relation between the perceived and the real nutritional status in children from rural areas. Participants: The study comprehends 206 students from first to eighth year of primary school from rural institutions of the Valparaiso region, Chile (43% females). Methods: The real nutritional status was measured using the Body Mass Index (BMI), and the perceived status by means of corporeal figures. The Socioeconomic Status (SES) was determined using the modified Graffar scale. The analysis was carried out using the concordance correlation coefficient kappa, and the chi-square test was used for the association of variables. Results: The subjects are concentrated in the low SES (82% male; 72% female). 49.5% of the students present overweight and obesity. Boys show higher prevalence of obesity (29%) than girls (20%). 62.5% of the females underestimate their weight, which surpasses the percentage of males (52.5%). 98.10% of the obese individuals underestimate their weight, as well as the 100% of the evaluated children with an overweight condition. Conclusions: Boys and girls from rural areas in conditions of overweight and obesity present a higher prevalence rate of an inappropriate perception of body image (underestimation), which has an important impact when recognizing their own condition of over nutrition. This status can have significant repercussions in public health, since it can be maintained to adult life and develop non-transmissible chronic diseases.

Keywords
Body mass index, Obesity, Weight perception, School children, Socioeconomic status.