Abstract

Introduction: overweight and obesity in children have experienced a significant increase around the world, however, there are regional differences due to many factors. Furthermore, evidence have showed that physical capacity in children has been affected as well. For this reason, the study goal was to assess nutritional status and physical capacity in 4 to 7-year-old children in a public school from South Chile. Methods: 351 students (6.1 years, SD = 1.13; 47.3% men) completed the study. To determine nutritional status, body mass index and Z-scores from World Health Organisation were used. Body fat percentage was measured with skinfold anthropometry. To assess physical capacity, 6-minute walking test (6MWT) was used. Results: overweight prevalence was 27.0% (range 21-32%), while obesity had 39.9% (range 33-50%), no gender differences were observed (p = 0.84). Mean body fat percentage was 19.1% in men and 20.9% in women (p = 0.02). For 6MWT, differences were found for age (p < 0.001) with an overall range of 421.5 to 540.2 mt. Discussion: our results showed a high prevalence of overweight and obese students. These results are higher than observed in other regions around the world. This study is a call for action in promoting healthy lifestyle through comprehensive programs in public schools.

Keywords

Dairy, Cheese, Cardiovascular disease, Obesity, Diabetes.