Abstract

Objectives: This study compares the adherence of immigrant and Spanish adolescents residing in the Madrid region (Spain) to national dietary recommendations. The factors compared were the consumption of items from the eight basic food groups (vegetables, fruits, bread/cereals, meat, eggs, fish, legumes and milk/dairy products), including the excessive or deficient consumption of eggs, meat and fish. In addition, the evaluation of excessive sweet foods or soft drinks in the diet was also considered. Subsequently, the influence of length of residence on dietary habits was examined. Materials and methods: Self-reported data were collected in a cross-sectional survey conducted over the period November 2007 to February 2008. The study participants were a representative sample of adolescents aged 13 to 17 years (n = 2,081, 1,055 girls) living in the Madrid region. Participants were recruited from secondary schools (grades 7th to 10th) randomly selected according to the geographic distribution of adolescents in the region. Results: Immigrant adolescents showed a greater likelihood of not fulfilling recommendations for the consumption of meat, fish, eggs, bread/cereals, and milk/dairy products. Their diets were also more likely to lack sufficient fish and they also consumed more eggs and more sweet foods and soft drinks than their native counterparts. Spanish adolescents were more likely not to meet recommendations for the intake of vegetables. Length of residence weakly affected dietary habits, with both negative and positive effects observed. Conclusion: The likelihood of not fulfilling dietary recommendations was higher among the immigrant adolescents with the exception of the intake of fruits and vegetables.

Keywords

Immigration, Nutrition, Length of residence, Acculturation, Adolescents, Spain.