



## Behavioural Perception and Awareness Among Overweight & Obese Children in A Private School of an Urban Area, Mumbai.

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### ABSTRACT

**INTRODUCTION:** Adolescence is a period of transition between childhood and adulthood. It occupies a crucial position in the life of human beings which is characterized by an exceptionally rapid rate of growth. Psychological effects such as Social stigma and Discrimination which are largely the result of culture bound values which view grossly obese

Individual as ugly and unhealthy, depression, low self esteem etc.

**MATERIAL & METHODS:** The study was conducted among 13 to 15 years old students. Sampling units were selected by using Systematic random sampling method. Data was collected using semi structured self administered questionnaire schedule.

Data of 897 students were collected, compiled and then entered in MS EXCEL 2003 worksheet. It was analyzed using SPSS 10.0.

**RESULTS:** 81.55% overweight and obese students perceive themselves as overweight and 100% overweight and obese students perceive them as obese and 9.9% overweight and obese students perceive them as normal. 44.3% overweight and obese students were conscious about their body weight while 21.8% overweight and obese students were not conscious about maintaining their body weight.

### KEYWORDS : PERCEPTION AND DIETARY PRACTICES

#### INTRODUCTION

Obesity compounds a common adolescent problem of low self-esteem and can disturb psychosocial development, interfere with the normal process of adolescence, a timeless journey that prepares the child for adulthood. An obese young person may have difficulty in dealing with peers and this communication problem can seriously disrupt normal adolescent development including depression, poor self image and difficulties in the home and social environment, like school<sup>(1)</sup>

Adolescence is a period of transition between childhood and adulthood. It occupies a crucial position in the life of human beings which is characterized by an exceptionally rapid rate of growth. Psychological effects such as Social stigma and Discrimination which are largely the result of culture bound values which view grossly obese Individual as ugly and unhealthy, depression, low self esteem etc<sup>(2)</sup>

#### MATERIAL AND METHODS

Cross-sectional study was conducted in all private schools present in the Urban area. There were 10 private schools in that area but only six schools given permission for study. Since that was the age of adolescence and at this stage lot of eating, physical activity patterns developed, and they do become conscious of their own body weight. Hence the study was conducted among 13 to 15 years old students. Sampling units were selected by using Systematic random sampling method.

**Perception and Awareness:** They were asked to select a picture which was closest to what they would like their body in future. This is to understand and what the student thought about overweight or obesity and how that can help them in preventing the problem. Data was collected using semi structured self administered questionnaire schedule.

Data of 897 students were collected, compiled and then entered in MS EXCEL 2003 worksheet. It was analyzed using SPSS 10.0.

#### RESULTS

There are only 32.7% children were aware about their own body weight and 67.3% children were not aware of their body weight. About 28.3% and 7.9% school children consider themselves as overweight and obese respectively and 55.1% and 8.7% children consider themselves as normal and underweight respectively. Data shows that 66.4% children were conscious about maintaining their own

body weight as otherwise only 33.6% children were not conscious about maintaining the body weight. About 73.1% children were not taking any special diet to prevent overweight and obesity and 26.9% children taking special diet to prevent the overweight and obesity.

Only 34.2% children perceive obesity as a problem while 65.8% children did not perceive that as a problem. About 17.9% children making conscious effort to prevent overweight and obesity and 82.1% children were not taking any type of effort to prevent overweight and obesity.

**Intervention:** At the end of each session, subjects were given health education depending on their history and BMI values to prevent further progression and complication of the disease.

The data about association between perception of obesity as a problem shows that 77.9% overweight and obese students perceived overweight and obesity as problem and 15.3% overweight and obese students did not perceive that as a problem. The above difference was found to be statistically significant [Chi square=339.080 df =1 p=0.000]

The data about association between conscious about maintaining body and overweight and obesity Among the student, 44.3% overweight and obese students were conscious about their body weight while 21.8% overweight and obese students were not conscious about maintaining their body weight. The above difference was statistically significant [Chi square=48.496 df=1 p=0.000]

The data about association between perception of body weight and overweight and obesity shows that, 81.55% overweight and obese students perceive themselves as overweight and 100% overweight and obese students perceive them as obese and 9.9% overweight and obese students perceive them as normal. There was statistical association present between perception of the student and overweight and obesity. [Chi square = 541 df=3 p=0.000]

The data about association between awareness of body weight and overweight and obesity shows, 33.4% overweight and obese students were know about their body weight and 37.9% overweight and obese students did not know about their body weight. The above finding was not statistically significant. [Chi square=1.699 df=1 p=0.192]

In the study it is found that overweight and obesity are significantly associated with perception of children about their own weight, perceiving that as a problem, making some efforts to prevent it and taking special diet for that problem.

As most of the obese and overweight children perceive their own body image well and non overweight and non obese adolescents thought themselves to be overweight and obese. This is a danger sign which also caution that strong recommendation at school level to prevent overweight and obesity may on other hand increase the prevalence of underweight which is already a big problem.

## DISCUSSIONS

The previous studies like studies done in Kerala <sup>(8)</sup> have also shown that perception among the adolescents is good among the obese though some societies consider overweight and obese to be normal and healthy.

Ms. Little Flower et al concluded that prevalence of overweight was 24 % and 65 % of subjects worried about body weight and 41% of subjects reported missing breakfast on weekdays. There was a significant difference between the actual and perceived weight status<sup>(4)</sup>

Elizabeth et al reported that teens obese by BMI, 19.6% were reported to be obese. Specificity of obesity status based on self reported BMI was 0.996 and sensitivity 0.772. Using BMI based on self reported height and weight correctly classified 96% as to obesity status. Hence study can use self reported height and weight to understand teen obesity and its correlates<sup>(5)</sup> Perception was more among adolescents who are already overweight and obese, about maintaining body weight, dieting and own body image and 81.5% of the adolescents knew that overweight and obesity is a problem but many did not know what caused it or what the consequence of overweight and obesity. <sup>(6)</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Many school children perceive themselves as obese or taking some special diet or making some effort to prevent that problem. As the prevalence of overweight and obesity is increasing it will be a good sign that children themselves becoming conscious about their own body to prevent future consequences of overweight and obesity.<sup>(7)</sup>

37.9 % students do not know about their weight status ie they were not aware hence awareness was not associated with overweight and obesity. 81.5 % students consider themselves as overweight and obese. The perception was significantly associated with overweight and obesity. 44.5 % students were conscious about their own body weight. These were significantly associated with overweight and obesity. 77.9 % students perceive overweight and obesity as a problem and these are significantly associated with overweight and obesity. Help adolescents, especially, develop personal fitness programs they can stick to during after-school hours. Avoid intimidating or marginalizing students who are unskilled in a sport, afraid of competition, or self-conscious about their athletic abilities. Expose kids to a diverse mix of physical activity approaches, including team-oriented challenges, individual fitness.

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