

Correlation between obesity and emotional, social, and behavioral problems associated with physical limitation among children and adolescents in Western Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Objectives: To evaluate the impact of body mass index (BMI) on limitation of physical activity and the associated effect on behavioral, school, and social problems among obese children in Western Saudi Arabia.

Methods: A cross-sectional obesity survey was conducted in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Data were collected between August 2014 and February 2015 from 281 obese children aged between 2-18 (girls: 130, boys: 151). Participants were selected randomly to represent different economic status, level of education, and family structure.

Results: The mean age of participants was 10.5 years for girls and 10.6 years for boys. Higher BMI was associated with physical activity problems in walking (50.6%), running (55.8%), and exercise (44.3%), with school problems in attention (37.4%) and follow-up duties fade (31.3%), and with social problems in doing things other children could do (42.8%), playing with others (46%), and continuing play (33.4%). There was no significant relationship between BMI and emotional problems and school attendance.

Conclusion: Higher BMI significantly increased physical limitation, problems maintaining attention in school, and social problems among obese children. However, emotional problems and school attendance did not show a significant correlation with BMI.

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