



ABSTRACT

Childhood obesity in Asia : current status and future trend

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The prevalence of overweight among all children and adolescents, from infancy to the age of 19, is on the increase worldwide. This figure for children under five years old is almost 6%, and for children 5 to 19 years, it is estimated at 18%. This results from individual factors and the creation and progression of an obesogenic environment in human societies. Obesity can affect a child's immediate health, educational attainment and quality of life. Children with obesity are very likely to remain obese as adults and risk developing severe non-communicable diseases.

The UNICEF report finds that several South East Asian countries are facing simultaneous crises of over and undernutrition. This double burden of malnutrition is happening in middle-income countries, placing the Middle East second in the world for overweight children. The latest reports show the prevalence of childhood obesity in India is 19.3%. In China, childhood obesity has become a significant public health issue. Based on Chinese criteria, 10.5% of children younger than six were overweight or obese. This figure for the age range 6-17 years is 19%.

Despite the rising prevalence of overweight and obesity, awareness of the magnitude and consequences of childhood obesity is still lacking in many settings, particularly in countries where undernutrition is common. Prevention of childhood obesity may not be seen as public health policy.

It seems comprehensive responses at governmental and individual levels are needed.

Keywords: children with obesity, asian children

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