



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Excess weight in preschoolers: prevalence and associated factors[☆]

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KEYWORDS

Excess weight;
Children;
Nutritional status;
Risk factors

Abstract

Objective: To study the prevalence and factors associated with excess weight in children enrolled in public schools in the states of Rio Grande do Sul (RS) and Santa Catarina (SC).

Methods: This was a cross-sectional study, carried out with children aged 4 to 6 years. The studied outcome was excess weight, defined by z-score > two standard deviations for body mass index (BMI)/age, compared with the World Health Organization (WHO) reference population of 2006/2007. Anthropometric measurements of body mass and height were measured in duplicate using standard techniques, in accordance with the WHO. Data were double entered using EPI-INFO software, release 6.04. Absolute and relative frequencies were calculated, as well as mean values and standard deviations. Associations between excess weight and other variables were assessed by using Poisson model with robust variance. STATA software release 12.0 was used ($p < 0.05$).

Results: A total of 4,914 children were evaluated (2,578 in RS and 2,336 in SC). In RS, the incidence of excess weight was 14.4% (95% CI = 13.1% to 15.8%) and in SC, 7.5% (95% CI = 6.5% to 8.7%). The variables associated with excess weight were number of household members, maternal education, marital status, number of children, mother's age at birth of first child, gestational age, and birth weight.

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Excesso de peso;
Crianças;
Estado nutricional;
Fatores de risco

Conclusion: Children enrolled in public preschools in RS had a two-fold higher excess weight prevalence than that identified in SC, demonstrating a significant difference in the magnitude of childhood obesity in two Brazilian states located in the same region.
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Excesso de peso em crianças de pré-escolas: prevalência e fatores associados

Resumo

Objetivo: Estudar a prevalência e os fatores associados ao excesso de peso em crianças matriculadas em escolas públicas dos estados do Rio Grande do Sul (RS) e Santa Catarina (SC).

Métodos: Realizou-se estudo transversal com crianças de idade entre quatro e seis anos. O desfecho estudado foi o excesso de peso, definido através do escore $Z > 2DP$ para o Índice de Massa Corporal (IMC)/idade, em comparação com a população de referência da OMS 2006/2007. As medidas antropométricas de massa corporal e altura foram aferidas em duplicata, utilizando-se técnicas padronizadas conforme a Organização Mundial de Saúde (OMS). Os dados foram duplamente digitados utilizando o software EPI-INFO, versão 6.04. Foram calculadas frequências absolutas e relativas e médias (DP). Associações entre excesso de peso e demais variáveis foram avaliadas em modelo de Poisson de variância robusta. Foi utilizado o programa STATA versão 12.0 ($p < 0,05$).

Resultados: Foram avaliadas 4.914 crianças (RS 2.578 e SC 2.336). No RS, o excesso de peso foi de 14,4% (IC 95% = 13,1-15,8%) e, em SC, de 7,5% (IC 95% = 6,5-8,7%). As variáveis que apresentaram associação com o excesso de peso foram: número de moradores no domicílio; escolaridade materna; situação conjugal; número de filhos; idade materna ao nascimento do primeiro filho; idade gestacional; e o peso ao nascer.

Conclusão: As crianças matriculadas nas pré-escolas públicas do RS apresentaram uma prevalência de excesso de peso duas vezes maior do que a identificada em SC, demonstrando uma diferença significativa na magnitude da obesidade infantil em dois estados brasileiros situados em uma mesma região.

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Introduction

The increasing prevalence of obesity has represented a significant change in the profile of health and disease worldwide in recent years.¹⁻³ In preschool ages, the early occurrence of body adiposity and fast weight gain represents a risk factor for the development of obesity in later life.⁴

The 2006 National Survey on Demographics and Health (Pesquisa Nacional sobre Demografia e Saúde - PNDS) evaluated children under 5 years of age and demonstrated a national prevalence of overweight of 6.6%, and of 8.8% in the South.⁵ The results of the 2008-2009 Household Budget Survey (Pesquisa de Orçamento Familiar - POF) pointed to an increase in the prevalence of overweight in Brazil that reached 33.5% of children aged between 5 and 9 years, ranging from 32% to 40% in the Southeast, South, and Midwest, and from 25% to 30% in the North and Northeast.⁶

Among the main determinants of childhood obesity that have been studied are high birth weight; maternal obesity during pregnancy, especially in the first trimester; parental obesity; low socioeconomic status; and low maternal education.⁷⁻¹⁰ In the study on the prevalence of obesity among preschool children in five cities of the state of São

Paulo,¹¹ obesity increased with the increasing *per capita* income. In São Leopoldo, RS, Vitolo et al.,¹² found a positive association between excess weight in children younger than 5 years of age and high socioeconomic status in the area of the health facility.

Moreover, important population-based studies on the prevalence of obesity measured in two cohorts of live births in Pelotas in 1982 and 1993¹³ recorded an increase in this prevalence of approximately 40% over almost a decade; obesity also increased with the family income level. In this same population, nutritional deficits (weight/age and length/age) were higher in children from families with lower incomes (10%) and lower in those from families of higher income categories (3%).

This article describes the main results of a study aimed to determine the prevalence of excess weight and associated factors in preschool children enrolled in public schools in the states of Rio Grande do Sul (RS) and Santa Catarina (SC), Southern Brazil.

Methods

This was a school-based cross-sectional study with data obtained from schools located in RS and SC. The study

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