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## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

### Dietary patterns of children and socioeconomical, behavioral and maternal determinants



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Dietary patterns;  
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#### Abstract

**Objective:** To identify dietary patterns of children and to verify their association with socio-economical, behavioral and maternal determinants.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional study with a random sample of 328 children aged 8 and 9 years. Dietary intake was assessed by food records in three nonconsecutive days and measured in grams of food groups and nutrients. Factor analysis and subsequent orthogonal rotation (varimax) were used to determine dietary patterns. Ordinal logistic regression was used to assess associations between dietary patterns and the studied determinants.

**Results:** Five dietary patterns were observed: "Traditional," "Sweetened beverages and snacks," "Monotonous," "Healthy" and "Egg-dairy." A higher maternal level of education was directly associated with "Sweetened beverages and snacks" and "Egg-dairy" standards. Low income children who were submitted to greater food restriction by parents/guardians followed the more "Traditional" standard, represented by the consumption of rice, beans, vegetables, cooked roots and tubers and red meat. The "Monotonous" pattern, represented by a high consumption of milk and chocolate powder, was most followed by children from the middle class. Children living in rural areas consumed more foods from the "Egg-dairy" pattern, when compared to those from the urban area.

**Conclusions:** Dietary patterns of children were associated with family socioeconomic status, maternal level of education, practice of food restriction by parents/guardians and location

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**PALAVRAS-CHAVE**

Padrões alimentares;  
Crianças;  
Condições  
socioeconômicas;  
Comportamento  
alimentar

of residence in urban or rural area. Better socioeconomic conditions contributed to a more nutritionally inadequate dietary pattern.

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### Padrões alimentares de crianças e determinantes socioeconômicos, comportamentais e maternos

#### Resumo

**Objetivo:** Identificar os padrões alimentares de crianças e verificar sua associação com determinantes socioeconômicos, comportamentais e maternos.

**Métodos:** Estudo transversal com amostra aleatória de 328 crianças de oito e nove anos. O consumo alimentar foi avaliado por registros alimentares de três dias não consecutivos e quantificado em gramas de grupos alimentares e de nutrientes. Análise fatorial e subsequente rotação ortogonal (varimax) foram usadas para determinar os padrões alimentares. Regressão logística ordinal foi usada para verificar associações entre padrões alimentares e os determinantes estudados.

**Resultados:** Cinco padrões alimentares foram extraídos: "Tradicional", "Bebidas adoçadas e lanches", "Monótono", "Saudável" e "Ovo-lacto". A maior escolaridade materna se associou de forma direta aos padrões "Bebidas doces e lanches" e "Ovo-lacto". Crianças de baixo nível econômico e que recebiam maior restrição alimentar pelos pais/responsáveis aderiram mais ao padrão "Tradicional", representado pelo consumo de arroz, feijão, hortaliças, raízes e tubérculos cozidos e carne vermelha. O padrão "Monótono", representado pelo elevado consumo de leite e achocolatado, foi mais consumido por crianças de classe econômica intermediária. Crianças que residiam em zona rural consumiam mais alimentos do padrão "Ovo-lacto" comparadas com as de zona urbana.

**Conclusões:** Os padrões alimentares das crianças estiveram associados às condições econômicas da família, escolaridade materna, prática de restrição alimentar pelos pais/responsáveis e localização da residência em zona urbana ou rural. Melhores condições socioeconômicas contribuíram para um padrão alimentar nutricionalmente mais inadequado.

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## Introduction

Childhood is a crucial period for the implementation of healthy eating and lifestyle habits, which are predictive for adult life.<sup>1</sup> "Pesquisa de Orçamentos Familiares" (The Household Budget Survey) indicated that the food consumption of the Brazilian population combines a traditional diet based on rice and beans with foods with few nutrients and many calories.<sup>2</sup>

Traditionally, studies that assess the population's food intake are based on analysis of macro and micronutrients. Currently, the assessment of overall food consumption has been appreciated, as it better reflects the actual diet status.<sup>3</sup> The study of dietary patterns allows associations between food combinations and certain health conditions to be made, often not detected in isolated analyses of food or nutrients.<sup>4</sup> Another advantage of analyzing dietary patterns is due to its capacity to reduce the number of variables generated in the food intake analysis to a small number of factors, with highly inter-correlated items and a significant representation of the total diet.<sup>5,6</sup>

The study of health status in children should not be performed without understanding the family and social

context in which the child is inserted. Parents influence the formation of the child's food habits through the food available in the household.<sup>1,7</sup> In addition, parents tend to have their eating behaviors reproduced by the child, and they are important in establishing rules and standards related to food practices and lifestyle.<sup>8</sup>

Socioeconomic factors are important determinants of individual food consumption. In developing countries, the increase in obesity has been found mainly in the higher socioeconomic classes.<sup>7,9</sup> Factors such as women working outside the home, easier preparation of food and behavior variables also contribute to the quality of the children's diet.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, this study aimed to identify the dietary patterns of children and verify their association with socioeconomic, behavioral and maternal factors.

## Method

This is a cross-sectional study, carried out between 2012 and 2013, with children from Viçosa, state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. Sample size calculation was based on the total number of children aged 8 and 9 years, enrolled in the 3rd and 4th years of all public and private schools located in urban

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