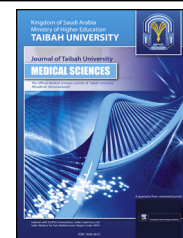




Taibah University
Journal of Taibah University Medical Sciences

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Original Article

Body image dissatisfaction and its determinants among young primary-school adolescents

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Received 4 May 2017; revised 5 July 2017; accepted 6 July 2017; Available online ■ ■ ■

المخلص

أهداف البحث: ازداد الوعي بشكل الجسم لدى الأطفال والمراهقين خلال السنوات الأخيرة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد عدم الرضا عن شكل الجسم والعوامل المرتبطة به بين طلاب المدارس الابتدائية.

طرق البحث: أجريت دراسة مقطعية في سبع مدارس ابتدائية تم اختيارها عشوائياً، تضمنت طلاباً من العمر 11 و 12 عاماً. تم استخدام استبانة استرشادية تعباً ذاتياً، تضمنت البيانات الديموغرافية والاجتماعية، ومعاملات مؤشر كتلة الجسم، والإدراك بشكل الجسم (مقياس تقييم الرسم الكفافي للأطفال).

النتائج: تضمنت هذه الدراسة 776 من طلاب المدارس الابتدائية. وكان لدى 60.1% من الطلاب عدم رضا عن شكل الجسم، وكان مرتبطاً بشكل ملحوظ بالجنس، ومؤشر كتلة الجسم. كما كان لدى الإناث معدلات أعلى من عدم الرضا 2.07 ضعفاً عن شكل الجسم بالمقارنة بنظر انهم من الذكور عند تعديلها بالمتغيرات الأخرى. وكان لدى الطلبة زاندي الوزن/البدناء 4.06 احتمالات عدم الرضا عن شكل الجسم بالمقارنة بالطلبة الذين لديهم مؤشر عادي لكتلة الجسم عند تعديلها بالمتغيرات الأخرى.

الاستنتاجات: تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على ارتفاع معدل انتشار عدم الرضا عن شكل الجسم، التي ترتبط بالجنس، ومؤشر كتلة الجسم بين طلاب المدارس الابتدائية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الوعي بشكل الجسم؛ المراهقين الشباب؛ عدم الرضا عن شكل الجسم؛ أطفال المدارس الابتدائية؛ تحديد صورة الجسم

Abstract

Objectives: Awareness of body image perception among children and adolescents has been rising during recent

years. The objectives of this study were to identify body image dissatisfaction and its associated factors among primary-school students.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted in seven randomly selected primary schools, involving students aged 11 to 12. A guided self-administered questionnaire, which included sociodemographic data, body mass index (BMI) parameters, and body image perception (Childress Contour Drawing Rating Scale), was used.

Results: This study involved 776 primary-school students. Approximately 60.1% of students had body image dissatisfaction, which was significantly ($p < 0.001$) associated with sex and Body Mass Index (BMI). Females had 2.07 times higher rates of body image dissatisfaction ($b = 0.73$, $OR = 2.07$, $95\% CI 1.53, 2.81$, $p < 0.001$) compared to their male counterparts when adjusted for other variables. Overweight/obese students had 4.06 times greater body image dissatisfaction ($b = 1.40$, $OR = 4.06$, $95\% CI 2.70, 6.10$, $p < 0.001$) compared to students with normal BMI when adjusted for other variables.

Conclusion: This study highlights a high prevalence of body image dissatisfaction that is correlated with sex and BMI among primary-school students.

Keywords: Body image determinant; Body image dissatisfaction; Body image perception; Primary-school children; Young adolescent

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Peer review under responsibility of Taibah University.



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Introduction

Body image issues are on the rise and affect people of all ages. Body image awareness has been observed among children and adolescents as early as 8 years old,¹ resulting in a preference for thinner bodies and desire to diet in pre-schoolers.² Body image refers to how a person perceives, thinks and feels about their body and appearance.³ This perception may be positive or negative and is greatly influenced by sociodemographic and environmental factors. Studies have demonstrated that body image dissatisfaction occurring during late childhood and adolescence is associated with increased negative affect.⁴

Many adolescents with normal weight compare themselves to images of very thin men and women presented by the media and perceive themselves as being fat and overweight. The ideal beauty standard, defined as having a slim and/or muscular body, makes individuals vulnerable to developing body image dissatisfaction.⁵ This dissatisfaction may continue to increase as the adolescent ages, with the greatest dissatisfaction peaking during young adulthood.⁶ Body image dissatisfaction may lead to both abnormal eating habits and unhealthy weight control behaviours.⁵ These children also tend to have unhealthy eating behaviours, such as binge eating, which may lead to unintentional weight gain over time. Social stigma and isolation experienced by overweight and obese adolescents may further exacerbate their problems with distorted body image.⁷ There is growing literature that shows girls as young as 8 years old already show higher concern towards body image perception and weight.^{1,2} An Asian study involving 13- and 14-year-olds found that 78.1% were dissatisfied with their current body size, even though 50% of the students had normal BMI, and those with high body image discrepancy scores were reported to be more likely to have higher BMI.⁸ In another study using the Figure Rating Scale among 14- and 16-year-olds, 95% of female students tended to choose the silhouette representing 10% underweight as their ideal or desired body image.⁷ The overweight students showed significantly greater body image dissatisfaction.⁷

Several factors have been identified as associated with body image perception. These include socioeconomic status, weight, age, sex, weight-control behaviour and advice that individuals received from family members and peers.⁷ Sociocultural pressures that favour thinness as the ideal have a strong effect on body image, especially among adolescents.⁵ The association between body image dissatisfaction and unhealthy eating behaviour, anxiety and depression among adolescents had been demonstrated,⁹ rendering studies on the determinants and risks leading to it obligatory.

Many similar studies have been carried out to study body image dissatisfaction. However, since cultural and environmental influence play significant roles in the development of body image dissatisfaction, local studies are needed to ascertain the prevalence of body image dissatisfaction among Malaysian adolescents. This study intends to determine the prevalence of body image dissatisfaction among younger Asian adolescents and to identify the determinants that influence body image dissatisfaction in this younger popula-

tion. Findings from this study may be useful in designing future interventions, which may be incorporated into the school syllabus to make adolescents aware of healthy body image so they are less easily influenced by the fad that views a thin body as the best body size.

Materials and Methods

Design and sampling method

This cross-sectional study used multistage cluster sampling. Students aged between 11 and 12 years old from 7 randomly selected primary schools were recruited. For each of the schools, four classes were selected. All students in selected classes who fulfilled the inclusion and exclusion criteria were included.

Sample size determination

The sample size for the study was calculated using a single-proportion formula. After inclusion of 20% non-response and cluster sampling design effects, the final sample size needed was 776.

Study instruments

The self-administered questionnaire used in this study consisted of 3 sections. The first section consisted of measurement of weight and height. Using a SECA digital weighing scale and body-metre, each measurement was obtained twice and recorded to the nearest weight 0.1 kg and height 0.1 cm. Average measurement was documented. Body mass index (BMI) was calculated and categorized according to BMI-for-age reference (WHO 2007).¹⁴ Underweight was defined as BMI-for-age less than 5th percentile, normal weight was BMI-for-age between 5th to 85th percentile and overweight/obese was defined as BMI-for-age more than 85th percentile.

The second section collected personal background information. Parental education level and income were obtained through another form given earlier together with the consent form, which needed to be filled by parents. The last section examined body image perception using the Childress Contour Drawing Scale (1993)¹⁰ (Figure 1). This scale is used because the figure rating scale is the easiest for young adolescents to understand compared to other scales such as the Adolescent Body Image Satisfaction Scale for Males (ABISS)¹¹ or the Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ),¹² which also assess body image perception among adolescents. This scale was specifically designed for use among pre-adolescent children, specifically Grade 5 to 8 (corresponding to students aged 10 to 13),¹⁰ and has been validated.¹³ In the scale, each of the eight figures was given a number that represented a different degree of body size (from thinnest to obese). The respondents were required to choose a figure that represents their current body size and their perceived ideal body size. A discrepancy score, which was a difference between the perception of current and ideal body size, was calculated. The results with "0" scores were classified as body image satisfaction and other scores as body image dissatisfaction.

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