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ABSTRACT OF THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE



PREVALENCE OF OVERWEIGHT TEXAS SCHOOLCHILDREN

The prevalence of children being overweight has more than doubled in the past 20 years. This study describes results from year 1 of a surveillance system to monitor body mass index in children at the state level. A sample of 6,630 children attending Texas public schools, representing fourth-, eighth-, and 11th-grade students within race/ethnic subpopulations, was assessed. Body mass index was calculated, and demographic information was obtained from a questionnaire. The prevalence of being overweight was 23%, 19%, and 16% for fourth-, eighth-, and 11th-grade students, respectively. Overweight prevalence was highest among Hispanic boys (30% to 33%), fourth-grade Hispanic girls (27%), and fourth- and eighth-grade African American girls (31% and 23%, respectively). Eleventh-grade white/other girls had the lowest prevalence of being overweight (6%). These data confirm the increasing prevalence of being overweight among US children, especially among Hispanic and African American students, compared to white/other students and fourth-grade students relative to eighth- and 11th-grade students.

Comments: The trend of children being overweight, which was highest among minority populations, is alarming because childhood obesity often persists into adolescence and adulthood. This is disturbing, in view of the fact that obesity is considered a risk factor for many chronic diseases as well as increased mortality. FSS

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