School-age children awareness of seriousness of obesity problem, health-related outcomes and effectiveness of self-control preventive strategies

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OBJECTIVES

Nutrition of children has become one of the most important problems of the international health policy [1]. Childhood obesity is a serious medical condition that may well be prevented by the lifestyle modification [2]. Therefore school-age children awareness of the problem is crucial for the educational programs due to endorsement of economic costs of the problem [3].

SUBJECTS & METHODS

This work is a part of the complex project “Assessment of the current nutritional status, nutrition-related health problems in school-age children in Ukraine”. 392 school-age children were included and grouped by the age: primary school (aged 6–9, n=75), secondary school (aged 10–14, n=202) and high school (aged 15–18, n=115). Original questionnaire was elaborated for the survey that consist of both multiple choice questions and «open questions» that encouraged children to give their own idea with the purpose of understanding a real awareness of the problem. Answers to the open questions about the causes and effects of obesity were analyzed. Standard statistics used to assess the results.

RESULTS

- Awareness of seriousness obesity problem gradually increases with age (primary school – 58.67 %, secondary school – 70.51 %, high school – 91.67 %, p<0.05) (Fig.1).
- One third of respondents regardless of age (primary school – 29.31 %, secondary school – 29.21 %, high school – 33.04 %, p>0.05) understand that obesity can cause serious health-related problems and the most detrimental changes occur in the cardiovascular system (Fig.2).
- We discovered that secondary-school children are less worrying of having obesity whereas more than half of high-school children are positive concerning obesity likelihood in them (p<0.05).
- Self-controlled situations is a main causative of the obesity for more than half surveyed children (53.33 % of primary school, 53.46 % of secondary school children and 41.74 % high school children, p>0.05).
- Portion size as the effective method of the obesity prevention was mentioned by 38.67 % of primary school, 48.08 % of secondary school children and 75.0% high school children, (p<0.01). Meantime just 30-40 % of respondents have an experience of the portion size control and 15-20 % do it episodically (p>0.05). Lack of experience and circumstances such as busy timetable were named as a main barrier for that (Fig.3).
- Less than 10 % of children are not aware of the causes of obesity and possible outcomes. Furthermore, 30 % of respondents were not compliant with the survey.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Regardless of age school-children are aware of seriousness of obesity problem, health-related outcomes and effectiveness of self-control preventive strategies.

2. Special education since primary school is necessary with the purpose of gaining relevant lifestyle skills.

REFERENCES

