

Lifestyle habits, consumption of non-nutritive sweeteners and obesity in students and young adults' population in Latvia.

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1975 the prevalence of obesity has tripled. As one of the habits of a healthy lifestyle is to reduce the fast sugars in our meals, the use of non-nutritive sweeteners in the food supply has increased by offering sweeter meals without extra calorie intake.

AIM

To explore the characteristics of students and young adults' lifestyle habits and consumption of non-nutritive sweeteners and their relation to overweight and obesity.

METHOD

A cross-sectional population study was carried out in three different schools and on social media with 997 respondents aged 8-30, divided into three age subgroups 8-13 y, 14-17y, 19-30y.

A voluntary anonymous questionnaire about their anthropometric data, lifestyle habits, eating and physical activities habits was conducted.

Data was statistically analyzed by Microsoft Excel 2010, SPSS version 19.0 and RStudio IDE 1.3.

RESULTS

- 16.6 % of respondents were overweight or obese (BMI>85th perc.) (Chart No1)
- Only 36.9% of adults do physical activities at the level that WHO recommends for prevention of noncommunicable diseases. Men are more physical active than women p=0.03. There was no significant difference in physical activities among overweight and normal weight respondents, except age group 8-13y students with normal weight take more extra sport activities (p=0.0103).
- 74.2% of young adults have screen time more than 3 hours per day, young adults have more screen time than students (12% vs. 3.2% more than 8 hours per day (p<2x10⁻¹⁶)).
- 67.3% of respondents eat less fruits and vegetables than WHO recommended 5 portions per day (Normal weight = 64.3%, Overweight = 75%)
- 27.7% of respondents add extra sugar to tea or coffee, only 3.3% of respondents add non-nutritive sweeteners in daily use. 12.5% of respondents use natural sweetener stevia.
- 51.20 % of respondents drink at least 250ml of sweetened beverages per day (men more than women p = 0.00187). (Chart No 2) Overweight adults drink more sweetened beverages than those with normal weight (p = 0.0194). Most popular sweetened beverage is fruit juice (40% drink once per month, men>women, p=0.02) (Chart No 3). Overweight people drink more Coca Cola Zero than adults with normal weight (p=0.009).

CHART NO 3 USE OF SWEETENED BEVERAGES IN POPULATIONS COMPARISON IN PERCENT

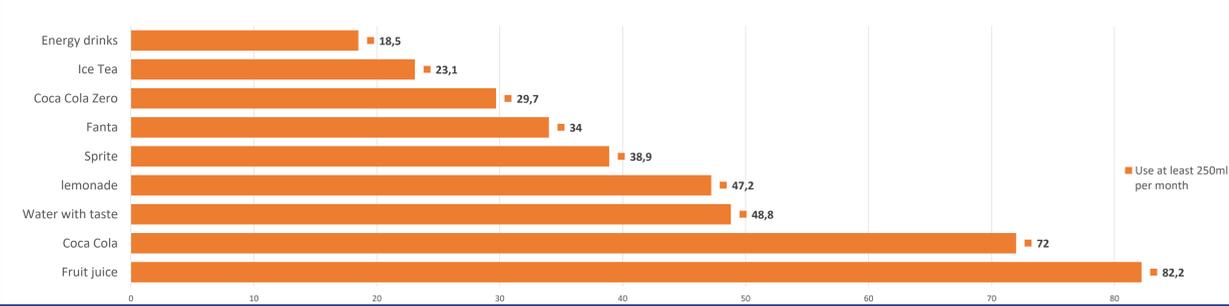


CHART NO 1 BMI IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

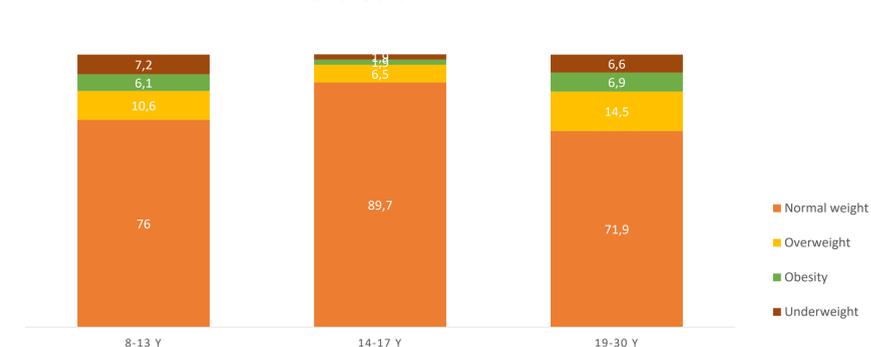
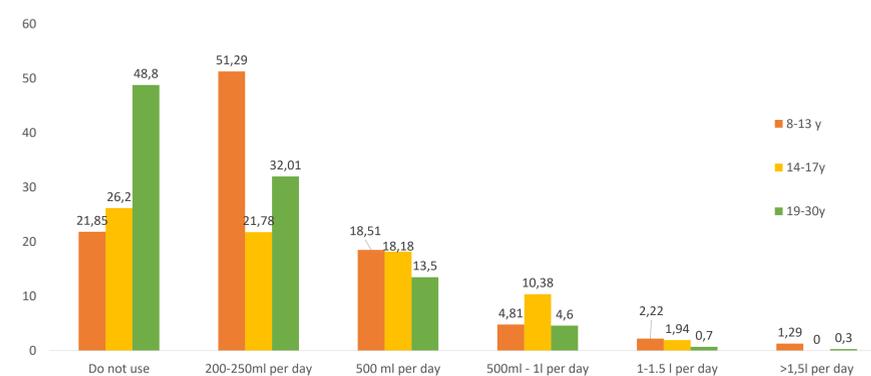


CHART NO 2 USAGE OF SWEETENED BEVERAGES PER DAY IN AGE GROUPS



CONCLUSIONS

Obesity, screen time, lack of physical activities and lack of fruits and vegetables in daily intake increase with age.

Young adults and students choose more sugar sweetened meals than non-nutritive sweetened. Being overweight correlates with the consumption of non-nutritive sweeteners, the consumption of fruits and vegetables as well as the level of physical activities.

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