



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

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## OBJECTIVES

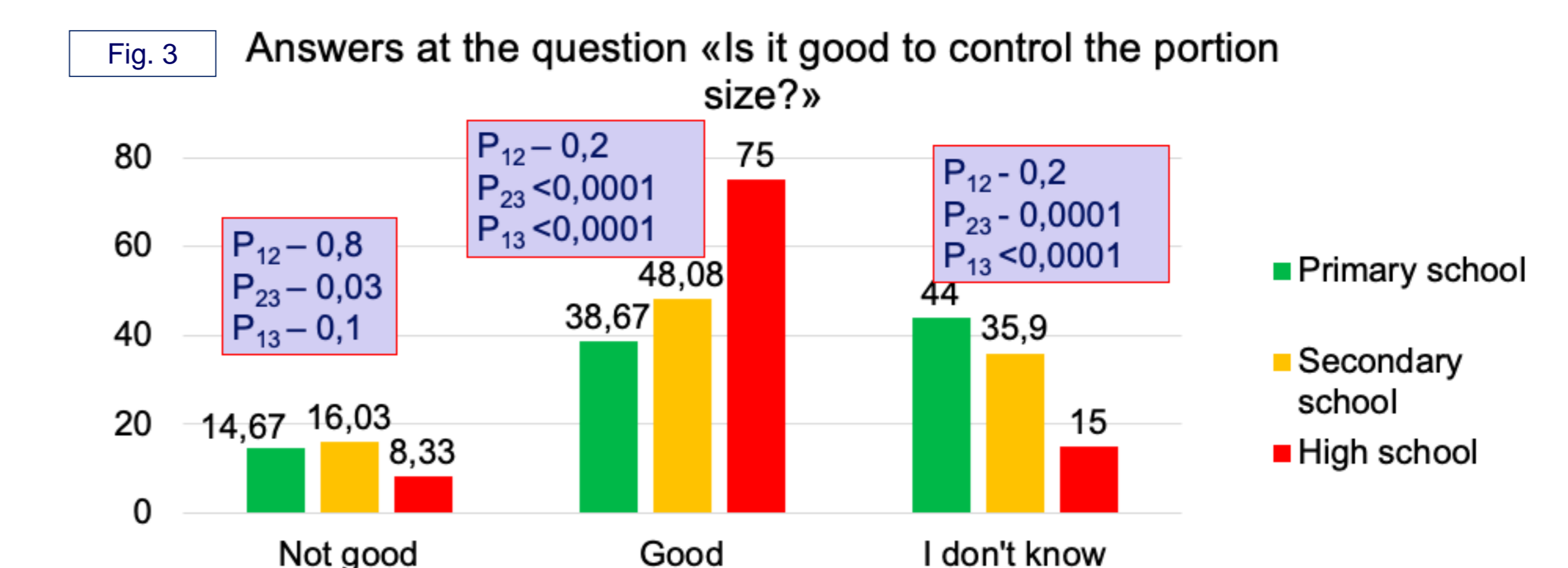
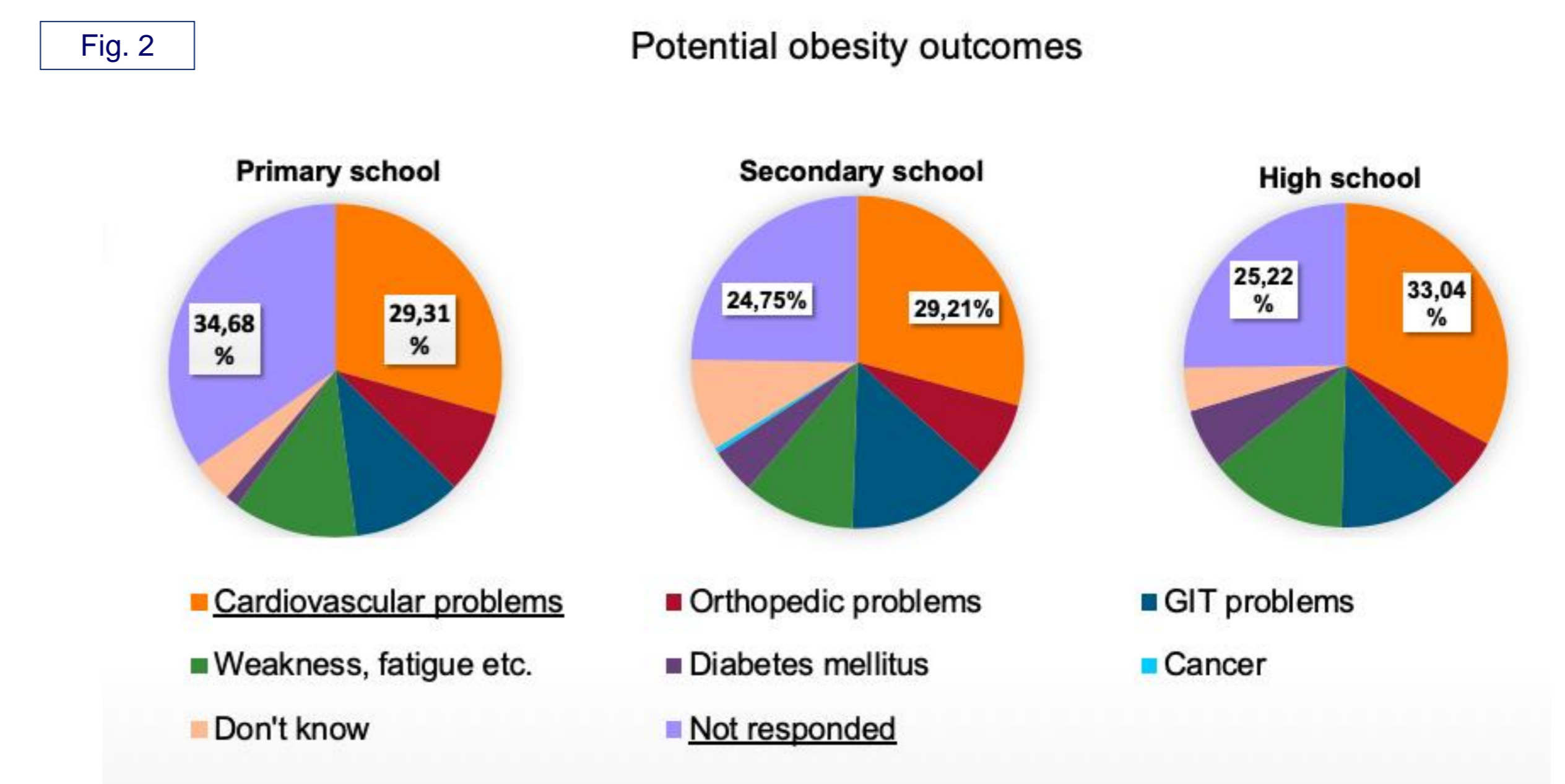
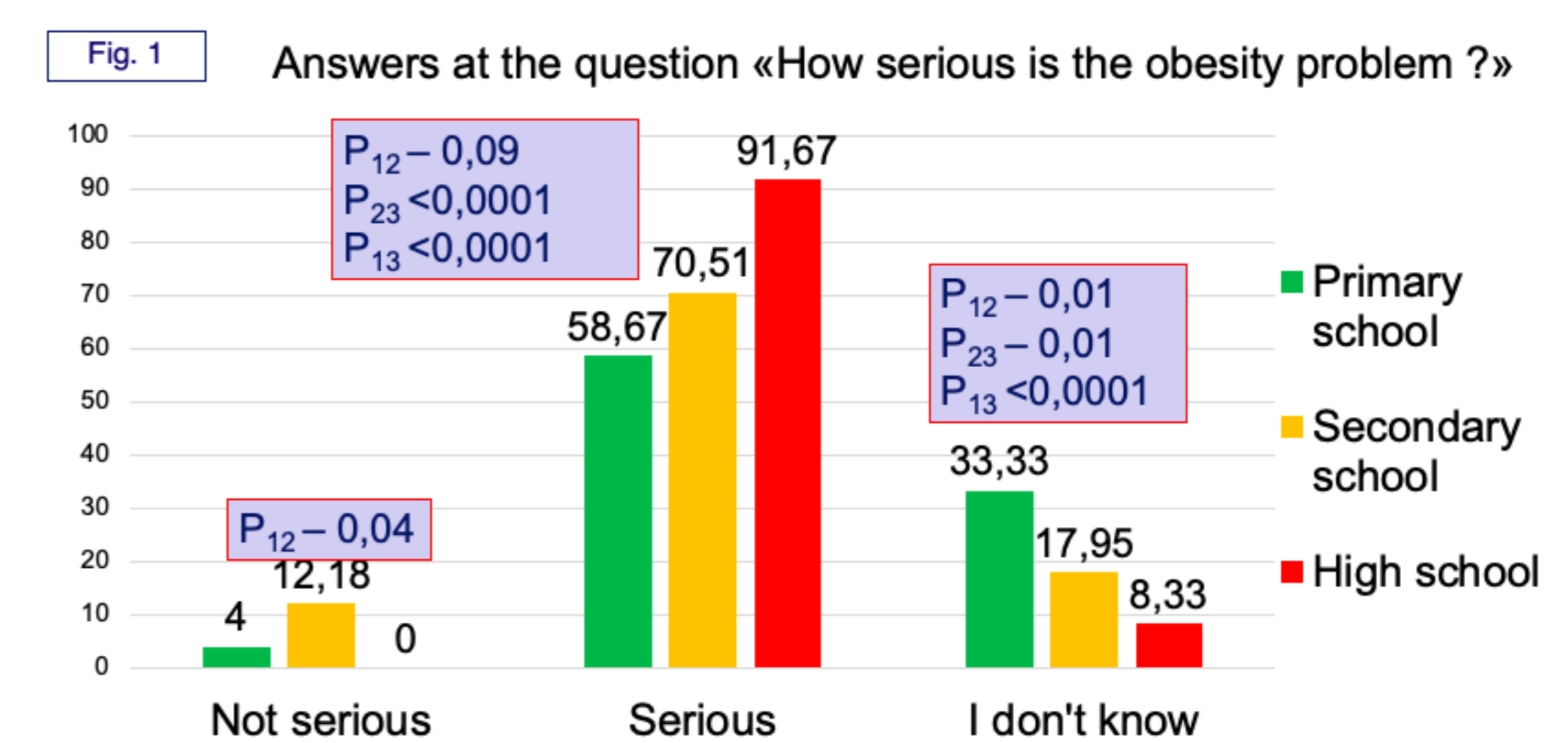
Nutrition of children has become one of the most important problems of the international health policy [1]. Childhood obesity is a serious medical condition that may well be prevented by the life style modification [2]. Therefore school-age children awareness of the problem is crucial for the educational 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 life style skills.

## REFERENCES

1. FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2018. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018. Building climate resilience for food security and nutrition. Rome, FAO.
2. Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity (2016). Report of the Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity.
3. World Obesity Federation (2017) Global data on costs of the consequences of obesity]. This tremendous problem forced United Nations to announce a decade of nutrition from 2016 till 2025 [United Nations (2018) Decade of Nutrition 2016-2025

