

2nd WORLD OBESITY CONGRESS

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International Conference on

DIABETES AND ENDOCRINOLOGY

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2nd WORLD VACCINES AND IMMUNOLOGY CONGRESS

October 15-16, 2018 | Tokyo, Japan

Biomed Res 2018, Volume 29 | DOI: 10.4066/biomedicalresearch-C5-014

PREVALENCE OF OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY AND ASSOCIATED RISK FACTORS AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN IN JORDAN

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Background: Marked increases in the prevalence of overweight and obesity have been observed in the last few decades in both adults and children worldwide. Obesity in childhood associated with high prevalence of elevated blood pressure, diabetes, and respiratory diseases. Little data are available describing the extent of overweight and obesity among children in Jordan. This study estimated the prevalence of overweight and obesity and determine their associated risk factors among schoolchildren in Jordan.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional survey was conducted on a sample of 1094 schoolchildren (571 boys and 523 females) aged 6-18 years in Jordan. The sample was selected randomly using multistage stratified cluster method. Trained data collectors interviewed and measured children's weight and height. A self-reported questionnaires was completed by students' parents; data was used to analyze the factors could be associated with overweight and obesity as a risk factors. Anthroplus, Epiinfo and SPSS were used in data analysis; Overweight and obesity were defined according to WHO reference 2006 for children 5-19 years.

Results: The prevalence of overweight was 18% (for both boys and girls) and 6.2% were obese (6.8 % for boys and 5.5 % for girls). Obesity among children of obese mothers and fathers was more prevalent.

Conclusion: The prevalence of overweight and obesity was in accordance with other studies conducted in Jordan. Thus, there is a critical need for obesity-prevention programs targeted toward children.

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