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Behaviors and practices related to the diet and physical activities among school children in a rural district, Sri Lanka

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Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) can be known as the biggest cause of pre mature deaths worldwide. It is revealed that the children's nutrition is primarily driven by the unhealthy food environment which promotes energy dense foods as well as discouraging the physical activities. It is widely recognized that there is a strong relationship between malnutrition and risk of obesity. Aim of this study was to determine the behavior and practices related to the diet and physical activities in school students in a rural district in Sri Lanka. This cross sectional study was employed among 603 students who were selected through the multi-stage stratified cluster sampling technique. The Global School Health Questionnaire (GSHS) was implemented to collect information related to the behavior and practices on diet and physical activities among school students. Height and weight was measured using standard protocol and BMI was calculated. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 20.0 version was used to analyze data. There were 51.6% females in the sample. Majority of students (35.5%) represented the age group 15 years old. Mean BMI was 18.15 kgm^{-2} ($\pm 3.28 \text{ SD}$) and it was observed that 65.7% of them were underweight while 8.0% were overweight. Results suggested that 72% students bought foods from the school canteen and 36.2% consumed junk foods. Study revealed that only 21.6% students engaged with a sport in the school. Majority of students of the study were underweight. Most of the students consumed unhealthy foods and consumption of healthy foods found to be very low. Majority of students of the study weren't physically active.

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