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An existing prevalence of overweight and obesity among school aged children at Bahir Dar city: An evidence for existence of double burden malnutrition in Ethiopia

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Statement of the Problem: Developing countries, including Ethiopia are experiencing a double burden of malnutrition. There is limited information about prevalence of overweight/obesity among school aged children in Ethiopia particularly in Bahir Dar city. Hence this study aimed to assess the prevalence of overweight/obesity and associated factors among school children aged 6-12 years at Bahir Dar city, northwest Ethiopia.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: A school based cross-sectional study was carried out. A total of 634 children were included in the study. Multistage systematic random sampling technique was used. A multivariable logistic regression analysis was used to identify factors associated with overweight/obesity. The association between dependent and independent variables were assessed using odds ratio with 95% confidence interval and p-value \leq 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Results: The overall prevalence of overweight and/or obesity was 11.9% (95% CI: 9.3, 14.4) (out of which 8.8% were overweight and 3.1% were obese). Higher wealth status [adjusted OR=3.14, 95% CI: 1.17, 8.46], being a private school student [AOR=2.21, 95% CI: 1.09, 4.49], use of transportation to and from school [AOR=2.53, 95% CI: 1.26, 5.06], fast food intake [AOR=3.88, 95% CI: 1.42, 10.55], lack of moderate physical activity [AOR=2.87, 95% CI: 1.21, 6.82], low intake of fruit and vegetable [AOR=6.45, 95% CI: 3.19, 13.06] were significant factors associated with overweight and obesity.

Conclusion & Significance: This study revealed the existing prevalence of overweight/obesity among school aged children in Bahir Dar city with in agreement of systematic review done sub-Saharan African countries. Thus, promoting healthy dietary habit, particularly improving fruit and vegetable intake is essential to reduce the burden of overweight and obesity. Furthermore, it is important to strengthen nutrition education about avoiding junk food consumption and encouraging regular physical activity.

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