

Risk factors affecting obesity development in high school students

Lise öğrencilerinde obezite gelişimini etkileyen risk etmenleri

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Dear Editor,

We read the publication on “Risk factors affecting obesity development in high school students: a community-based case-control study” with a great interest (1). Yıldırım and Uskun concluded that “the presence of an obese person in the family/neighborhood, transportation to school by vehicle, and having a best friend of the same sex who wanted the subject to stay at the same weight were significant risk factors in terms of obesity (1).” We would like to share ideas and experience on this observation. In fact, pediatric obesity has become a new emerging problem worldwide. The lack of active transportation or effect of friend might be important risk factors. However, it should be noted that despite having active transportation or a non-obese friend, children still have the chance to obtain excessive foods from shops nearby or on the way to school (2). Even in areas with a high prevalence of malnutrition, obesity can still be observed. In our experience, in rural villages with malnutrition problems, obese children can be seen in the richest families in that community (3, 4). The only isolated risk factor is the economic background of the child’s family. If children do not get money from their family, they cannot buy and eat junk food and might not result in unwanted obesity.

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Authors' Response

Dear Editor,

We would like to express our thanks to the valuable author for their interest they showed to our article. Currently, sedentary lifestyle is one of the most important factors that leads to the development of obesity (1). Insufficient physical activity and sedentary lifestyle cause decreased energy consumption, accumulation of excessive calories acquired by way of foods as fat in the body, and thus increased weight gain (2). Based on this, it may be thought that one of the easiest and most inexpensive ways in fighting obesity is regular physical activity. Therefore, adolescents' reaching school by walking is very important, because it is an easily applicable and sustainable activity. As the valuable author stated, adolescents may meet places where unhealthy foods are sold on the way to school and may wish to purchase these foods. This may be considered an important risk factor. However, this potential risk factor was not evaluated in this research study, and thus may be considered a limitation of the study.

When the relationship between obesity and the family's socioeconomic status was examined, differences between different populations were specified. Generally, a low socioeconomic status has been reported as a risk factor in developed countries, while increased socioeconomic status has been associated with obesity in developing coun-

tries (1). In the research study titled "Health Behavior in School-Aged Children," an inverse correlation was generally reported between socioeconomic status and obesity (3). Different results in this area may result from regional differences. In this study, the relationship between obesity and socioeconomic status was not specified.

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