



Nutri-young: impact of socioeconomic contexts on eating habits, lifestyles and body satisfaction of adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The development of both health-promoting and risky behaviors frequently occurs during adolescence, as do changes in body composition and image. These modifications play a determining role in future health and quality of life, therefore quantifying them is essential.

Objectives: To evaluate the eating behaviors and other lifestyles of high school students, their satisfaction with body image, and nutritional status; to study the aggregation of less healthy lifestyles; and to establish a comparative analysis between two educational institutions with distinct sociodemographic backgrounds.

Methods: A cross-sectional, comparative study was conducted between two educational institutions in the Porto metropolitan area (Portugal): a Professional School and a Private Cooperative School. Students, after obtaining consent from their legal guardian, answered structured questionnaires on the dimensions under study, including a validated food frequency questionnaire. Anthropometric measurements were performed by trained observers.

Results: A high prevalence of risky behaviors was observed in both institutions, particularly in the Professional School, which has a less favored socioeconomic context. Overall, these institutions appear to have lower adherence to a healthier lifestyle pattern (mean 2.36 vs. 2.73, $p=0.021$; range of scope: 0 to 5). The prevalence of macro- and micronutrient inadequacy was significantly higher in the Professional School, although both had a sodium intake inadequacy greater than 75%. Most students are dissatisfied with their body image (79.2% in the Professional School and 61.6% in the Private and Cooperative School, $p=0.162$). The prevalence of overweight (excess weight and obesity) was high, exceeding 30%.

Conclusion: There are significant differences in eating habits and other lifestyles among students from schools in distinct sociodemographic backgrounds, which could serve as a basis for future interventions and contribute to an effective improvement of the school environment, which is expected to promote health.

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