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Dietary intake patterns, determinants, influences and health consequences

The Healthy Lifestyle in Europe by Nutrition in Adolescence (HELENA) study aimed to investigate different lifestyle factors and health outcomes among European adolescents. Their dietary intake was assessed via different complementary methods. The aim of this presentation is to summarize the main dietary intake patterns derived from the HELENA study, as well as the most important determinants and health consequences of the adolescents' dietary patterns. Adolescents' breakfast consumption was associated with lower body fat content and healthier cardiovascular profile, though only half of the adolescents could be categorized as breakfast consumers. Their food intake results in comparison with the guidelines urge the need to improve their dietary habits. More in particular the consumption of fruits and vegetables should be promoted, while the consumption of meat, fats and sweets should decrease. Sugar sweetened beverages (SSB) are the most important energy contributor from all liquids consumed by European adolescents and was related with increased insulin resistance (HOMA-IR).

Adolescents with better diet quality were less at risk for IR when having higher physical activity (PA) as well. The energy % from dietary fat intake was strongly linearly associated with total, truncal and abdominal adiposity independently of the PA level in adolescents. Adolescent's total diet quality was positively correlated with both paternal & maternal educational level (more pronounced in northern Europe) and with parental occupational level. Public health initiatives should educate children & adolescents regarding balanced food choices and PA in order to prevent diseases in later life.

Biography

Inge Huybrechts is a nutritional epidemiologist and methodologist and has more than 15 years of experience in nutrition research with an important focus on obesity prevention. She obtained a PhD in Medical Sciences from the Ghent University and has investigated lifestyle causes (diet, physical activity, sedentary behavior, sleep behavior and stress) and health, addressed by methods in clinical and general epidemiology. She is author in more than 200 peer-reviewed scientific papers, published in reputed journals within the fields of nutrition, epidemiology and obesity. She coordinated several projects in the field of epidemiology and public health in the past 10 years.