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Obesity or normal nutritional behavior; which should be the main focus in children and adolescents?

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Over the past decades, obesity has become a global concern. This issue is not limited to a certain range of age so that a plethora of research body has focused on obesity in childhood and adulthood. Several studies have also supported the impact of obesity in raising the rate of mortality and the incidence of non-communicable diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular diseases. However, in parallel with these findings, a new concept, metabolically healthy obesity has been developed in this area. According to this new concept, metabolic parameters could be normal such as insulin resistance, lipid profile, etc. despite of obesity phenotype. Consistently, it has been confirmed in several studies that metabolically healthy obese individuals are not significantly different from those of normal weight in respect of risk of obesity-related disorders such as CVDs, and liver fibrosis. Putting all these findings together raises the question whether the obesity phenotype is a troublemaking health issue or obesogenic behaviors even without obesity phenotype? Is it possible for obese individuals to have normal behavior, and normal weight individuals, in contrast, have inappropriate behaviors such as excessive intake of junk foods, sedentary life style, overeating, etc.? Although, no documented study has been so far carried out in this field, but the experience of the author attest to the fact that the obesity phenotype is not necessarily correlated with the eating behaviors; and the issue which leads to the obesity-related complications in different ages may not be the obesity phenotype but is the abnormal nutritional behaviors even though in non-obese individuals. Thus, it seems necessary to put more emphasis on establishing normal nutritional behaviors in childhood instead of obesity phenotype and fitness.

Figure 1 Is it possible to consider the obesity phenotype as a confounding variable in relation between behaviors and Non-Communicable Diseases?

Biography

Ata Pourabbasi completed his PhD in the field of Cognitive Neuroscience at Endocrinology and Metabolism Research Institute (EMRI). His main research focus is on "Relation between health problems, medical illnesses and cognitive functions especially in children and adolescents". He has developed a new concept named Cognitomics in which human behavior is considered as the main window into cognitive functions. He has established Cognitomics Lab at EMRI for expanding his studies.

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