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The effect of health promotion program on anthropometric indices in overweight and obese students of Shiraz elementary schools

Iran Jahanbin

Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Iran

Background & Objectives: The prevalence of obesity and overweight among children and adolescents is significantly increasing in industrialized and developing countries. It has been estimated that 10% of the world's school-age children are overweight. In the present study, we aimed to evaluate the effect of health promotion program on anthropometric indices in overweight and obese children of Shiraz elementary schools.

Method: In this interventional study, we recruited 145 elementary school children. Two schools from each educational district were selected using random simple sampling method. 20 first- to fifth-grade students who were obese or overweight were selected from each school and were randomly assigned into intervention and control groups. Weight and height of the selected students were measured and their body mass index (BMI) was calculated as well. Afterwards, the students of the intervention groups, accompanied by their parents, participated in a health promotion program consisted of two 30-to 45-minute sessions per week for 2 consecutive weeks. The students' height, weight and BMI were measured again three months after the intervention.

Results: There was a statistically significant difference in the mean change scores between the intervention and control groups in terms of birth order, educational districts, and the number of hours spent on computers per day, access to sport and recreation facilities and the frequency of canned and prepared food consumption.

Conclusion: It can be concluded that health promotion program plays effective role in controlling weight and preventing obesity in elementary school children.

jahanbin@sums.ac.ir