

Nutritional status of students according to sex and age. Metropolitan area of Santiago, Chile, 1986-1987 Estado nutricional de escolares según sexo y edad. Región metropolitana, Chile, 1986-1987.

Ivanovic,

Olivares,

Ivanovic,

A representative sample of 4509 schoolers from elementary and high schools in the Metropolitan area of Santiago was randomly chosen and their nutritional status analyzed by anthropometric measurements. Percentages of weight for age (W/A), height for age (H/A) and weight for height (W/H) were evaluated according to WHO tables. Undernutrition (low W/A) was diagnosed in 31% of males and 28% of females, obesity (increased W/H) in 9% of males and 17% of females and overweight in 18% and 22%, respectively. Undernutrition increased while obesity decreased with age. To a large extent, differences found in nutritional status could be explained by mild growth failure which existed in 27% of males and 28% of females. Therefore, W/H better expresses the nutritional status of these schoolers. The high prevalence of obesity and overweight is a serious health problem demanding preventive measures in order to avoid complications in later life.