



ACADEMIC EXAMS
AT THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LISBON
INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED TRAINING

Masters:

School Health

Name of Student:

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Subject of Thesis:

State of Nutrition, Dietary Behaviour and Lifestyles: Characterisation of an Adolescent Population

Date of Defence:

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Mark:

Very Good by Unanimity

Jury:

President: Professor João Carlos Gomes - Pedro (FMUL)

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ABSTRACT

Healthy nutrition and physical activity are essential agents for a good health condition and also for a good physical and intellectual development of youngsters. Healthy food habits and physical activity must be introduced precociously, as it is during the growing period that one acquires habits and behaviours of experimentation that will influence one's adult lifestyle.

In the quantitative paradigm, this investigation, descriptive and correlative, had the purposes of characterizing youngsters' behaviours and food patterns, levels of physical activity and sedentary activities and to determine the prevalence of overweight and obesity in teenagers from the secondary schools of Padrão da Légua and Senhora da Hora (schools from Senhora da Hora Health Centre school health group influence area).

The gathering of data was carried out through the application of questionnaires to 320 teenagers (53,1% of females and 46,9 of males with an average of 16 years of age). From the obtained results we point out, in what concerns to the nutrition condition, represented by the value of IMC, that the female gender shows slightly superior values when compared to the male gender (22,4 vs. 21,8), having meanwhile verified a similarity in both genders in the distribution among the different percentiles. When using the criteria referred by the CDC⁶² and by Cole et al⁶⁸ et al we verify, respectively, a prevalence of 15% and 16,9% of overweight and of 4,4% and 3,8% of obesity for the totality of the sample. These adolescents show low levels of physical activity. We also verify an inversely proportional correlation between the level of physical activity and the percentage of body fat mass. When considering the time spent with TV and personal computer, we verify that during the week these teenagers spend an average of $9,5 \pm 7,2$ hours and $2,7 \pm 2,6$ hours, respectively, while at the weekend those values are $6,3 \pm 4,7$ hours and $5,2 \pm 4,7$ hours.

As for the food habits, we verify an excessive consumption of fizzy drinks and sugars and a reduced ingestion of fruit, which is eaten by 29,4% up to 4 times a week and vegetables, eaten the maximum three times a month by more than 50% of the teenagers, not having noticed statistically significant differences in the ingestion of the food groups between genders. The vegetable soup could be an additional source of horticultural products, but it presented low levels of consumption among the studied teenagers. In this study we were also able to verify a larger consumption of meat in relation to fish and of the latter in relation to eggs.

When considering the daily ingestion of macronutrients we see an average of 2837 calories in both genders, 120 grams a day of proteins and 372 grams a day of carbon hydrates. Meanwhile, we confirmed the existence of statistically significant differences in the ingestion of calories, proteins, carbon hydrates, iron and sodium for all ages in both genders, observing an intake above the amounts recommended by the DRI^{139,207}.

Key words: Nutritional condition; Food habits; Physical activity; Adolescents

