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Weight/Height² Indices in Hungarian Youth During The Twentieth Century

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ABSTRACT Together with the late Prof. Dr. O.G. Eiben, one of the authors recently published a book concerning secular changes of 22 body measurements in 3-18 year-old boys and girls in Hungary during the last century. Adding to this, it was intended to study similar data of W/H^2 , as derived from the published weighted means of height and weight. The authors prefer the notation W/H^2 as weight and mass are not identical. The results are presented in terms of secular changes and sex differences in the 20th century in Hungary, and by comparison with the recent nation-wide data from the Netherlands. The positive secular change of height in Hungary may be considered as a positive health indication, the post-war increase of weight for height in boys 9-18 year-old as a negative one, and the post-war horizontal course of W/H^2 in 15-18 year-old girls as an encouraging development. In the Netherlands, weight for height in children and youth remained unchanged in the period 1965-1980, and increased clearly in 1980-1997. The W/H^2 indices in Dutch boys show in early childhood a little higher, and after 7 years of age lower values than their Hungarian counterparts in the 1990s. In girls, the picture is similar, but the differences are much smaller.