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Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity in Nigerian Children

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ABSTRACT Overweight and obesity in childhood and youth have undesirable physical and psycho-sociological consequences and therefore need periodic surveillance. One thousand two hundred and twenty-nine school children, ages 9-13 years in Ado-Ekiti, Southwest Nigeria participated in the study. Height, weight, BMI, systolic and diastolic blood pressure (BP) were determined using the protocols of ISAK and AHA. Overall, the prevalence of overweight and obesity for boys and girls in the younger age category (9-11 years) were 1.5 percent and 1.1 percent, respectively. Corresponding data for adolescent boys and girls (12-13 years) were 0.9 percent and 1.2 percent respectively. BMI positively correlated with stature ($r = 0.77$; $p < 0.01$), diastolic BP ($r = 0.300$; $p < 0.01$), systolic BP ($r = 0.44$; $p < 0.01$), age ($r = 0.14$; $p < 0.01$), and body mass ($r = 0.21$; $p < 0.01$). The regression analysis showed that age and body weight accounted for 48.2 percent of the variance in the children's body mass index ($R^2 = 0.484$, $F_{(2, 1228)} = 573.075$, $p = 0.000$). Prevalence of overweight and obesity among Nigerian children and adolescents, and its association with elevated blood pressure necessitate the implementation of appropriate preventive intervention strategies including healthy eating and regular participation in school- and community-based physical activity programmes.