

Behavioral habits of schoolchildren and their relationship with obesity: an integrative literature review

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ABSTRACT

Childhood obesity is characterized by the excessive accumulation of fat that is harmful to quality of life, with a weight/height index higher than the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards. Its multifactorial complexity involves socioeconomic, cultural, environmental, genetic and biopsychosocial issues. The increase in the consumption of ultra-processed foods, combined with the sedentary lifestyle resulting from the growing use of screens by children and adolescents, contributes significantly to this scenario. Massive advertising of low-nutritious, high-calorie foods also plays a major role in this reality, fueling what is considered a childhood obesity pandemic. Attention to children's health becomes crucial, since the habits acquired at this stage can directly impact the health of future generations. Health promotion in this context should be carried out collectively, addressing topics such as lifestyle, food and citizenship, aiming to develop skills and security in the self-management of young people's lives.

Keywords: Childhood obesity, Sedentary lifestyle, Health promotion.

INTRODUCTION

Childhood obesity, according to the World Health Organization (2021), is the excessive accumulation of fat that is harmful to quality of life and has a weight/height ratio higher than the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards. There is a consensus that obesity is a multifactorial problem, conditioned by socioeconomic, cultural, environmental, genetic, and biopsychosocial issues (BRASIL, 2021). However, the consumption of ultra-processed foods is one of its most evident causes. In Brazil, the consumption of these foods has increased in all age groups in the twenty-first century (ABESO, 2016). In addition, in the age of technology and with the increasing time of screen use by children and adolescents, a sedentary lifestyle affects many families (GUEDES, 2019). There is also the massive advertising of low-nutritious, high-calorie foods that corroborates the existence of what many authorities call the childhood

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obesity pandemic (NAHAS, 2017). Attention to children's health has been emphasized in many countries, as it has been observed that the consequences of lifestyle at this stage can directly affect the health of future generations. Health promotion directed to this population becomes more efficient by developing activities from a collective health perspective, in which various issues should be addressed, for example, lifestyle, food, citizenship, etc. In this, health promotion intervenes with regard to competence and safety in self-management in the life of young people (BRASIL, 2021).

OBJECTIVE

To analyze through an integrative review the relationship between obesity and the behavioral habits of schoolchildren.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is the result of an integrative review, which according to Souza, Silva and Carvalho (2010) is a research that allows bringing together a wide field of knowledge incorporating the theoretical and empirical literature so that it is possible to understand the analyzed phenomenon, the definition of concepts, and the review of theory. Where it provides broader and more ordered information, capable of producing a set of knowledge (Ercole; Melo; Alcoforado, 2014). As for the classification of objectives, the research is exploratory, seeking to familiarize the researcher with the problem in order to make it more explicit and explanatory (Gil, 2002).

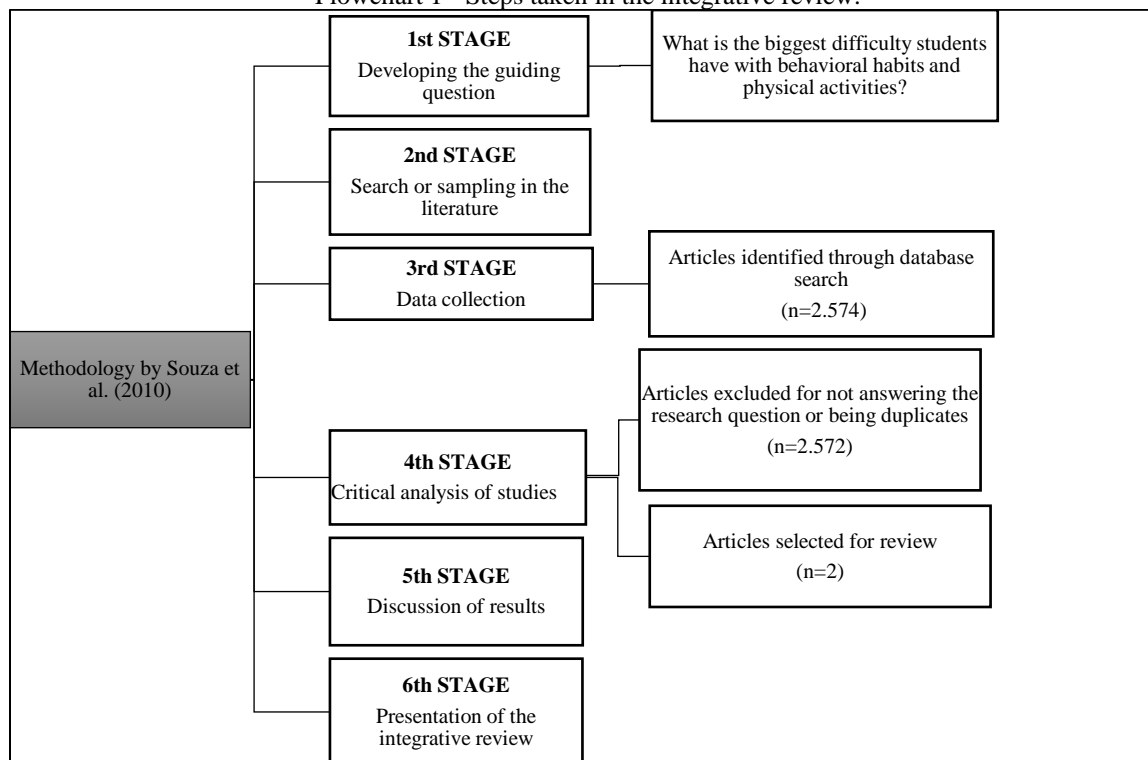
According to Souza *et al.* (2010), the elaboration of the integrative review goes through six stages, namely, elaboration of the guiding question, search or sampling in the literature, data collection, critical analysis of the included studies, discussion of the results, presentation of the integrative review.

The databases used were Latin American Literature in Health Sciences (LILACS), Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), PubMed, CAPES Journals, Medlars Online (Medline), Google Scholar and Adolec. The following search strategy was used using the following keywords: "physical health (AND) students (AND) behavioral habits (OR) excess body fat".

The inclusion criteria consisted of original articles published between 2013 and 2023, and the abstract of the article was read, and were carried out with children and adolescents.

The location and selection of the studies are described in Flowchart 1. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the articles were selected for reading in full, from which they were chosen to be included in the integrative review sample. The data were evaluated and distributed in a representative table of the selected research, which contains the following information: authors, journal, year, title, objective, sample and main results.

Flowchart 1 - Steps taken in the integrative review.



Source: Authorship.

DEVELOPMENT

In the final sample of this research, 2,574 publications were identified, of which: In the Latin American Literature on Health Sciences (LILACS): 1,122 articles found, Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO): 452 articles found, PubMed: 153 articles found; CAPES journals: 351 articles found; Medlars Online (Medline): 202 articles found, Google Scholar: 247 articles found, and Adolec: 47 articles found. After this screening, 2,570 were excluded, including journals, abstracts, experience reports, conclusion papers, and duplicate articles.

Table 1 - The main characteristics and results of the selected articles.

Author/year	Objective	Methodology	Results	Conclusion
Guimarães <i>et al.</i> (2012)	OBJECTIVE: To verify the association of biopsychological, socioeconomic and behavioral factors in overweight and obese schoolchildren.	A questionnaire adapted from Oliveira et al. in the form of an interview, an anthropometric assessment (body mass and height) was carried out to calculate the body mass index (BMI) and classification of overweight and obesity according to Conde and Monteiro.	Regarding the distribution of obesity and overweight by sex, there was an equitable distribution among girls, while in boys overweight represented 77% of the sample.	Biopsychological, socioeconomic and behavioral factors seem to interfere with overweight and obesity in schoolchildren in Florianópolis.

<p>Albuquerque <i>et al.</i> (2018)</p>	<p>The objective of this study was to raise awareness among adolescents at a State School in the city of Campina Grande – Paraíba about the importance of healthy eating habits and the practice of physical exercise as a way to prevent obesity.</p>	<p>Diagnostic evaluations were carried out through questionnaires to verify the students' eating habits and physical exercise.</p>	<p>The issues involving the theme of obesity were discussed through lectures, and the consolidation of the stages of the project and internalization of the concepts involved dynamics, games, play, construction of materials such as posters and fanzines, practice of aerobic physical exercises such as running, dances and functional circuits and at the end of the project an informative booklet was prepared to disseminate information on the subject.</p>	<p>The work made it possible to inform and raise awareness among adolescents and the entire school community about the impacts of obesity on health and to promote changes in behavioral habits in order to reduce the rates of obesity and morbidities associated with it.</p>
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Source: prepared by the authors.

In the results of the research by Guimarães *et al.* (2018), present it to examine the interrelationships between the socioeconomic, biopsychological, and behavioral components between overweight and obesity. In addition to curricular physical education, 57% performed other physical activities during the week, 30% twice a week and 16% only on the weekend. However, the insufficient share and magnitude of physical activity among students stand out, favoring a positive energy balance thanks to a caloric intake greater than expenditure (Guimaraes *et al.*, 2018)

In the research by Albuquerque *et al.* (2018), it was found that most do not see obesity as a pathology, but as an increase in body fat and probable damage to the body. One of the answers drew attention when he conceptualized obesity as the complexity of an organ to create sucrose, evidently demonstrating that the student was confusing an effect (diabetes) with a criterion.

The literature indicates that the regular practice of physical activity provides a sequence of benefits to the body, including reduced cravings, greater insulin action, and better physical, social, and mental comfort. In the school where the plan was developed, it was found that 23% of the students who responded to the questionnaire did not practice any type of physical activity, 28% practiced physical activity every day and the rest practiced it at least once a week. The investigation also detected that 40% of the students who answered the questionnaire only practice physical occupations in student classes that take place once a week. However, these classes are limited to one meeting per week, which makes procedural practice impossible (Albuquerque *et al.*, 2018)



FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this investigation, studies indicate that obesity is a multifactorial pathology that causes a serious danger to health and numerous restrictions in the person, students with obesity combat some problems in physical education classes, however, it is necessary for student leadership to launch awareness campaigns talking about the value of eating healthy foods combined with the practice of daily physical exercise. According to the philosopher Immanuel Kant "the human being is what teaching makes him" schools should give lectures, given by nutritionists and physical education specialists, promoting the construction of healthy eating habits and physical exercise as a profound ally in the fight against sedentary lifestyle.



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