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PREVENTIVE HEALTH IN A CHANGING WORLD

Correlates of health-related quality of life among school-aged children in Singapore

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Background

Literature suggests an inverse relationship between excess weight and health-related quality of life (HRQoL), but few have examined the other characteristics which may influence HRQoL. We aimed to understand the correlates of HRQoL in school-aged children in Singapore.

Methods

We recruited 11-year-old children (n=160; 63% males) from a local primary school. HRQoL was evaluated using the KINDL-Kid self-reported questionnaire comprising six subscales: physical well-being, emotional well-being, self-esteem, social functioning, family functioning, and school functioning, which aggregate to a total HRQoL score (range: 0-100). Height and weight measures were taken by the school and weight status was categorised using the local Singapore reference. Comparison of means between groups were performed using non-parametric tests, and results are presented as median (interquartile range).

Results

Compared to males, females reported lower physical well-being scores [75.0(25.0) vs 68.8(25.0); P=0.04], but no difference was seen for the other subscales. Among the ethnic groups, Malay and Chinese children reported lower family functioning [68.8(25.0) and 68.8(18.8), vs 87.5(15.6), P<0.05], school functioning [43.8(25.0) and 43.8(31.3), vs 78.1(46.9), P<0.05] and total HRQoL scores [62.5(10.4) and 65.6(15.9), vs 78.1(19.5), P<0.05] compared to the Indian children. Children with lower learning ability reported lower school functioning scores [43.8(18.8) vs 56.3(28.1) and 50.0(43.8), P<0.05] than children of mid and high ability. Severely overweight children reported lower family functioning [50.0(21.9) vs 75.0(25.0), P=0.03] and total HRQoL scores [(51.0(19.3) vs 65.2(16.4), P=0.05] compared to acceptable weight children.

Conclusion

HRQoL can be influenced by various characteristics, implicating the design of health promotion initiatives among school-aged children in Singapore.