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## Children's Eating Behavior According to Gender and Body Mass Index

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Childhood is an important period of life, when children develop life-long nutritional habits and behaviors. It is harder to change these behaviors with advancing age. So monitoring eating behaviors and suggest actions aimed at promoting healthy eating habits at early ages is very crucial. Purpose of this study is to evaluate differences in eating behavior according to gender and body mass index (BMI) percentiles. The sample of the study consist of 157 (49.7% girls, 50.3% boys) fourth grade primary school students (9 to 11 years old). Study data collected by questionnaire which includes general and nutritional information, anthropometric measures and Child Eating Behavior Questionnaire (CEBQ). CEBQ has 35 questions which determines the scores of eight sub-scales. While four of those subscales [Food Response (FR), Enjoyment of Food (EF), Desire to Drink (DD and Emotional Overeating (EOE)] reflect behaviors related to "interest in food", other four subscales [Emotional Undereating (EUE), Satiety Responsiveness (SR), Slowness in Eating (SE) and Food Fussiness (FF)] reflect behaviors related to "lack of interest in food". The data was analyzed with SPSS. Children divided into overweight ( $\geq 85$ th percentiles) and non-overweight ( $< 85$ th percentiles) groups according to their BMI percentiles. Being overweight was significantly more frequent in boys (%63.1) than girls (%36.1) ( $p < 0.05$ ). FR, EF and DD scores were significantly higher in boys than girls ( $p < 0.05$ ). When each subscales scores compared with BMI groups, only mean EF scores was significantly higher in overweight group ( $p < 0.05$ ). EF scores was positively; SR, SE and EUE were negatively correlated with BMI ( $p < 0.05$ ), but all correlations were weak. Our findings indicate that "EF" is the most important behavior to deal with in children to develop healthy eating behaviors.

### Biography:

Msc. Yılmaz is a research assistant in Ankara University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Nutrition and Dietetics Department. He is currently PhD student at Hacettepe University, Nutrition and Dietetics Department. His interest topics are public nutrition, nutritional epidemiology.