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## Double Burden of Malnutrition, Dietary Habits, and Sedentary Behaviors among Moroccan School Children (The Case of Beni Mellal-Khenifra Region)

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Changes in dietary habits and lifestyle are considered the main factors associated with major diet-related diseases such as obesity which is currently viewed as a serious worldwide public health issue. Surprisingly, in Morocco, obesity becomes implemented while malnutrition still has a heavy burden, especially among disadvantaged population groups. However, there are no detailed reports concerning the status of this disease. The national data are very limited. In this survey, we aim to determine its prevalence and its associated factors among school children in Beni Mellal Khenifra region. The sample consisted of 254 students aged 12-18 years, including 107 girls and 147 boys. For each student, we have calculated the body mass index and defined their nutritional status, referred to Rolland-Cachera MF's curves. Overall the students surveyed, nearly 76% have BMI values "normal" and 24% have a nutritional problem of underweight, overweight or obesity. The prevalence of overweight and obesity was 3.8% and that of underweight was 19.5%. Excess weight (overweight and obesity) was higher in girls (7%) than in boys (2.2%). However, underweight was strongly observed among boys than girls (23% versus 12.7%). When the gender is considered, the difference was statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 5.70$ ,  $p < 0.058$ ).

No significant association was found between nutritional status of children and snack foods consumption (hamburgers, panini, pizzas, fries, cakes ...). The prevalence of underweight children in the present study increased with age in both sexes which can be due to inappropriate diet.

In conclusion, risk factors for underweight, overweight and obesity need to be more understood in Morocco to implement a preventive strategy including supervision of children weight, nutritional education and promote diversified food.