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Obesity and hypertension in 11-13 years adolescents - reality of a health care unit

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Background: Obesity emerged as a serious public health problem and is nowadays the most common chronic disease in paediatric age and conditions more risk of developing psychological and social problems and also other morbidities during lifetime, namely cardiovascular diseases. It has been described a strong correlation between primary hypertension and overweight in children and adolescents.

Aim: to determine prevalence of overweight (OW), obesity (OB), prehypertension (PH) and hypertension (H) in 11 to 13 years old adolescents and to study if there is an association between variables of blood pressure (BP) and weight.

Methods: cross-sectional descriptive and analytical study in adolescents guarded in one primary health care unit (PHCU) aged 14 at December 2015, who performed global health consultation between 11 and 13 of age, with BP, weight and height records. The criteria used were those used by European Society of Hypertension for PH and H and by World Health Organization for OW and OB. Qui-square test was used to verify association between BP and weight variables.

Results: sample of 78 users (43 are male). The following prevalence rates were found: OW - 25.6%; OB - 16.7%; PH - 9.0%; H - 6.4%; all rates were higher in boys versus girls. There was no association between OB and H but there was a statistically significant association ($p=0.013$) between excessive weight (OW plus OB) and high BP (PH plus H).

Conclusion: Despite heterogeneity of data observed in other studies and small sample size of this study, results point for a high prevalence of OW, OB, PH and H in this PHCU. Knowing that hypertension has a growing impact and frequency and that healthy lifestyle habits are formed during childhood and adolescence, early detection of these conditions and promotion of care and healthy lifestyle is essential at these ages in a short term.