Body Mass Index in Adult and Elderly Individuals

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Dear Editor,

Bopp et al[1] state that a large part of the studied population presents excess weight and metabolic syndrome; however, it is necessary to observe that they use a single classification of body mass index (BMI) for adult and elderly individuals.

To evaluate the nutritional status of individuals through the BMI is a simple and important method in population-based studies, including the ones involving the elderly[2]. However, it is important to respect the different recommended classifications, so that there is no discrepancy between the methodologies employed in the studies, measurement biases or even type I errors, where a significance is present in the sample, when this difference in the population actually does not exist[3].

Keywords

Body mass index; metabolic syndrome; adult; aged.

The use of BMI and its cutoffs adopted for the analysis of Malnutrition, Eutrophia and Obesity in the elderly has been broadly discussed. For this age range, a BMI between 22 and 27 kg/m^2 is considered Eutrophia. BMI levels < 22 and > 27 kg/m^2 are classified as low weight and excess weight, respectively[2]. Whereas for adults, the BMI considered to be adequate is between 18.5 and 24.99 kg/m^2, according to the World Health Organization[4]. The differences between these cutoffs are due to the body alterations seen at different age ranges, such as the decrease in the lean mass and increase in adipose tissue caused by the aging process.

Life expectancy has been increasing greatly. In parallel, the number of individuals with chronic diseases has also been increasing, mainly cardiovascular diseases, which are currently the main cause of death worldwide[5]. In this context, studies such as the one by Bopp end cols. are of utmost importance to contextualize the high prevalence of risk factors in specific populations.

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