

## How to Take Care of Your Body: Not an Obvious Insight, but an Essential School Lesson

José Francisco Kerr Saraiva,<sup>1</sup>  Natalia Rezende Baraldi<sup>1</sup> 

Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Campinas,<sup>1</sup> Campinas, SP – Brazil

*Editorial referring to the article: School Health Education Program “Happy Life, Healthy Heart”: A Randomized Clinical Trial*

Over the years, the most traditional institutions provide modern concepts and philosophy, assuming the important role that schools play today. What is relatively new is the comprehension of the student in an active position in the learning process.<sup>1</sup> This change of view has made it evident that, beyond the regular curriculum, there is the need to understand about the basic life skills of others.<sup>2</sup> Bodily functions are one example, as they have a direct impact upon the learning process.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the child's capacity as a messenger or influencer is still consolidated as the one who brings knowledge home.<sup>4</sup>

Beyond this scenario, a significant increase in cases of heart disease per year has been observed.<sup>5</sup> Randomized trials demonstrate that a change in lifestyle is the first and foremost step toward preventing the most common incidences of heart diseases, such as myocardial infarction.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, it is clear how essential it is offer schools the knowledge and tools necessary to promote a healthy life. The easy recognition of what is healthy (or not) is important so as to convert the daily choice into a conscious field, which can be a strong weapon against obesity, diabetes, atherosclerosis, and coronary heart disease.<sup>4</sup>

According to Mari et al.,<sup>7</sup> the Happy Life, Healthy Heart program is an effective strategy, through education and the training of teachers and students, to promote the reduction of risk factors for cardiovascular disease within the school environment. However, it should be noted that, despite being a universally

recognized technique, the demonstration of these results in the Brazilian population lacks information and recognition of their benefits. In this context, the present results bring relevant information and potential population impact. The present results should serve as a subsidy in the discussions and planning for the development of prevention programs in public and private schools throughout the country, positively impacting cardiovascular health and the quality of life of millions of students and teachers in educational networks.

Clearly, the results over a short period of time are scarce, but over decades, it has the potential to hinder the absurd increase of deaths witnessed throughout this century, strongly correlated to a contemporary habit of eating, working, and exercising, which school lessons can reverse.<sup>8</sup> It is well-known that adults who adhere to a healthy lifestyle show lower rates of cardiovascular morbidity and mortality than those who do not.<sup>9</sup> By contrast, children who have unhealthy habits and who are overweight are at a higher risk to develop risk factors prematurely, in turn producing an increase in cardiovascular mortality during adulthood.<sup>10</sup> Brazilian society's initiatives to prevent CVD, which include teacher training, are crucial in a continental country with a high prevalence of obesity in children and adolescents.

Therefore, now is the time to qualify teachers to improve the quality of health care concerning the prevention of cardiovascular risk factors as a pivotal strategy to preventing cardiovascular mortality within the Brazilian population.

### Keywords

Disease Prevention; Cardiovascular Diseases; Education.

**Mailing Address: José Francisco Kerr Saraiva**

Av. John Boyd Dunlop, s/n, Jd. Ipaussurama, Campinas, SP. Postal code: 13060-904 - Brazil.

E-mail: jfsaraiva@uol.com.br

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