

EDITORIAL

A Burden of Physical Inactivity in School-Age Students: The Early Beginning of Cardiometabolic Risk

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It is well-known that sedentarism has a close association with the risk of cardiovascular and metabolic diseases. The physical inactivity lifestyle contributes to the prevalence of obesity and hypertension in children, highlighting a big health problem since most individuals who were hypertensive and obese in childhood/adolescence become hypertensive and obese adults¹. On the other hand, physical exercise is a frontline non-pharmacological strategy to control and treat hypertension, as well as to prevent obesity, which should be encouraged among children/adolescents to reduce cardiometabolic risk in adulthood². In this context, the mapping of risk factors associated with hypertension at the early age should be considered a primary step to plan public policies for disease prevention and health promotion, reducing the burden on healthcare resources³. Both obesity and high blood pressure have multifactorial causes, among them low levels of physical activity in adults, children, and adolescents. It is of utmost relevance to investigate the prevalence of physical activity levels in scholars, mainly in a country such as Brazil, with enormous disparities among regions.

In the current issue of the International Journal of Cardiovascular Sciences, Azevêdo et al.⁴ investigated physical activity levels, as well as the anthropometric and cardiovascular profile in school-age students attending public schools in the state of Sergipe, northeast of Brazil. The study reported high rates of physical inactivity for both boys and girls, and increased blood pressure in overweight school-age students. Regarding anthropometric profiles, intriguing data showed a high prevalence of low body weight in the age group from 16 to 17 years for both sexes. In contrast, a previous study found a high prevalence of overweight/obesity in school-age students in a city of the Brazilian South region⁵, suggesting a discrepancy between the Brazilian South and Northeast regions that must be considered for Brazilian public policies in health promoting at the primary care level³. From a practical perspective, physical education classes, as well as the public schools' pedagogic programs, must work together for health promoting and health education⁶, and physical activity should be encouraged to prevent cardiovascular risk starting from childhood to adult life.

Keywords

Sedentarism; Students; Exercise; Adolescents; Physical Activity; Risk Factors; Metabolic Diseases; Public Health.

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