Childhood obesity and eating behavior

Obregon, A. M.; Pettinelli, P. P.; Santos, J. L.

Abstract

The prevalence of childhood obesity has increased substantially in the recent decade as a result of the reduction in physical activity and the availability of high-fat and high-energy-density foods which the paediatric population faces daily. Although children are highly exposed to these foods, there is a wide variation in body weight, suggesting the presence of different patterns of response to an "obesogenic" environment. This wide variability from the point of view of eating behaviour involves a number of social issues (e.g., food availability, cost) as well as genuine behavioural traits such as the response to satiety, energy compensation, eating rate, responsiveness to food, food reward and dietary preferences. This article reviews the main physiological variables related to energy intake affecting eating behaviour in the paediatric population.

Keywords Childhood obesity, Children eating behavior, Food preference, Body-mass index, Childrens food preferences, Hispanic children, Reinforcing value, Genetic influence, Chilean children, Nonobese women, Energy-intake, Weight-gain, Reward, Endocrinology & Metabolism, Pediatrics