

## Assessment of Nutritional Status of Adolescents in Kandy district- Sri Lanka

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The term adolescence is commonly used to describe the transition stage between childhood and adulthood. Although 21% of the population of Sri Lanka consists of adolescents, studies on nutritional status among this group are limited. The general objective was to assess the nutritional status of grade 11 students. The descriptive cross sectional study was carried out in grade eleven classes in government schools in type 1AB and 1C. 12 different schools were selected randomly. BMI was calculated and nutritional status was assessed using the age and sex specific BMI- percentiles growth charts and WHO cutoff marks. The prevalence of thinness (<5th percentile) was 49%, the prevalence of risk of overweight (85th -95th percentile) was 6.5%, and prevalence of overweight (>95th) was 2.1%. Boys were at higher risk of both underweight and overweight than girls. The nutritional status showed statistically significant associations with maternal education level and the number of siblings in the family. Of all the students, 32.3% were not satisfied with their current body weight and most of them were girls (39.5%). Of the students who belonged to risk of overweight category 64% were not following any weight related practices. Over half of the risk of overweight students' (60%) perception was that they belonged to normal weight category and 50% of overweight students assumed that their body weight is within the normal range and the other 50% assumed that they are in risk of overweight. But none of the overweight students perceived that they are overweight. Skipping breakfast was the major problem (36.7%). Under nutrition, risk of being overweight and overweight are the problems of adolescence. Awareness, health education and focused interventions are timely requirement to minimize health related problems of adolescents in Sri Lanka.

*Key words: Adolescence, Nutritional Status, BMI (Body Mass Index), Sri Lanka*

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