

KiGGS – The German Health Interview and Examination Survey for Children and Adolescents

Abstract Principal Publication

Bundesgesundheitsbl – Gesundheitsforsch – Gesundheitsschutz 2007 · 50: 736-743

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The prevalence of overweight and obese children and adolescents living in Germany. Results of the German Health Interview and Examination Survey for Children and Adolescents (KiGGS)

Abstract Overweight and obesity are an increasing problem: worldwide, for Germany and for children and adolescents. Until now there have been no representative and age-specific assessments of the prevalence of obesity among children and adolescents in Germany. Thus, the standardised height and weight measurements gathered in the German Health Interview and Examination Survey for Children and Adolescents (KiGGS) have, for the first time, provided national, representative data about overweight and obesity in young people. The terms ‘overweight’ and ‘obese’ are defined based on percentiles of the body mass index (BMI) of the Kromeyer-Hauschild reference system. Of children and adolescents between the ages of 3 and 17, 15% exceed the 90th BMI percentile of the reference data and are thus overweight, 6.3% exceed the 97th BMI percentile and thus suffer from obesity by this definition. The proportion of overweight rises from 9% of 3–6-year-olds to 15% of 7–10-year-olds and 17% of 14–17-year-olds. The prevalence of obesity is 2.9%, 6.4% and 8.5% for the same age groups respectively. No clear differences between boys and girls or between East and West Germany are detected. Children are at a higher risk of being overweight or obese if they have a lower socioeconomic status, have a migration background, or have mothers who are also overweight.

Keywords Health survey - Children - Adolescents - Body mass index BMI - Overweight - Obesity
