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“Influence of nutritional education on changes in diet and selected anthropometric indicator of children and adolescents – evaluation of the Municipal Office in Koszalin”

Summary

The aim of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the nutrition education program carried out among children and youth from Koszalin (about a city of 100,000 in the West Pomeranian Voivodeship). The study was conducted among 480 students aged 9, 12 and 15. For each age group, a group subjected to nutritional education and an uneducated group was identified. Nutrition education was carried out by qualified people: dietitians or food technologists and human nutrition.

The experiment was divided into three stages. In the first stage, the assessment of dietary habits, assessment of intake, assessment of physical activity and assessment of nutritional knowledge and selected anthropometric parameters in the educated and uneducated group was made. In the second stage, students from the group educated during the six months were subject to nutritional education. In the third stage, the nutritional habits, the assessment of consumption, the assessment of physical activity, the assessment of nutritional knowledge and selected anthropometric parameters in the educated and uneducated group were again made. As a result of the experiment, the students in the educated group improved eating habits: more often they consumed fruits and vegetables, milk and preserves, cereal preparations, eggs, fish, and less frequently sweets, sweetened beverages, energy drinks, carbohydrate-fat snacks. In addition, the percentage of people realizing the reference values of the standard for consumption of selected nutrients increased, among others: fiber, water, vitamin A, vitamin E, folates, calcium, magnesium, iodine. In addition, students subjected to education improved their knowledge about food and nutrition as well as additional physical activity. Changing eating habits and increasing additional physical activity had an impact on the improvement of selected anthropometric parameters: z-score BMI, z-score waist. In the group without education, there were no significant changes in the dietary habits, in the percentage of people realizing the reference values of the standard for the consumption of selected nutrients, in nutritional knowledge and physical activity. In the uneducated group, adverse changes were noted for

selected anthropometric parameters (increase in the percentage of people with excessive body weight).

As a result of the conducted research it was shown that the implemented nutritional education program was effective and influenced the change of eating habits, the level of knowledge about food and nutrition, improvement of physical activity and improvement of selected anthropometric parameters of educated students. In addition, as a result of the experiment, it has been proven that improperly shaped and uncorrected eating habits can lead to an increase in body weight among children and adolescents.