



## SUMMARY

A cross-sectional descriptive study was carried out on year eight students of girls only schools in the Gampaha Municipal Council in August 2005 to determine the prevalence and some associated factors of overweight. Year eight students belonged to the group, "adolescents". Adolescent period is considered as a critical period as development of healthy or unhealthy habits that tend to stay throughout life occur during this period. So studying associated factors of overweight and obesity in adolescents is important for its prevention.

The total study population was 698. Non-response rate was 5.8%. Students' weight was measured using an electronic solar power weighing scale (Seca  $\text{\textcircled{R}}$ , Australian) to the closest 100g. At every 50 measurements, calibration was checked with a standard weight. Their height was measured using a microtoise tape to the nearest 0.1cm. Information regarding the socio-demographic and economic factors, food consumption pattern, activity pattern, birth weight, breast feeding duration, parental body size, knowledge on nutrition were obtained by two questionnaires filled by the student and the parent or guardian. Obesity and overweight were defined using gender and age specific body mass index (BMI) criteria recommended by the International Obesity Task Force. (IOTF)

Socio-demographic and economic factors were assessed in 657 students. Twenty-three students suffered from long term illnesses and they were excluded in analysis of associated factors of overweight. The prevalence of

overweight was 7.73% and that of obesity was 2.05%. Knowledge on nutrition was not satisfactory in the study population. Sitting time more than eight hours ( $p=0.04$ ) and parental body size ( $p<0.001$ ) showed a statistically significant positive association with overweight. Consumption of cheese, butter and margarine ( $p=0.04$ ), milk and other dairy products ( $p=0.04$ ) and fruits ( $p=0.03$ ) showed a statistically significant negative association with overweight. Other variables did not show a statistically significant association with overweight.

This study showed that overweight and obesity are becoming increasingly common in our adolescent school girls with economic and nutritional transition.