PARENT’S PERCEPTIONS OF RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH SEDENTARY BEHAVIOURS AND OUTDOOR PLAY

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Background

An huge percentage of children from the South of Europe, where there is the highest rate of obesity, do not meet the public health guidelines of the daily physical activity. In addition, rates of sedentary behaviours, especially screen activities, are clearly increasing. Therefore, research on the children’s lifestyle and its association with environmental factors is potentially important for identifying subgroups at risk and encourage interventions. The present study evaluates the associations between female children sedentary behaviours (i.e. TV viewing, computer use, electronic games) and children’s outdoor play, and parents’ perception of their residential neighbourhood.

Methods

The sample comprised 1350 healthy female children aged 3-10 years. Height and weight were measured, and Body Mass Index (BMI) was calculated subsequently. Participants were classified as normal weight or overweight/obese (Cole et al., 2000). Environmental variables, sedentary behaviors and physical activities were assessed by questionnaire filled by their parents - the Environmental Module of the International Physical Activity Prevalence Study (IPS, 2002) was used. Logistic regressions, with adjustments for parental education, child age and the clustering of children in schools, were used.

Conclusion

In summary, the present study revealed that Portuguese female children whose parents reported a negative perception of the social and built environment were more likely to be inactive outdoor, especially at the weekend. Findings emphasize the need for policymakers to develop urban strategies to provide environments with better conditions for physical activity, avoiding perpetuation specific sedentary behaviors among children.

References