

One in five children globally has excess weight

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One in five children or adolescents globally experience excess weight, according to a study published online June 10 in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

Xinyue Zhang, Ph.D., from Sichuan University in Chengdu, China, and colleagues conducted a systematic literature review to estimate worldwide prevalence of overweight and obesity in children and [adolescents](#) from 2000 to 2023 and to assess potential risk factors for and comorbidities of obesity.

Based on 2,033 studies (154 different countries or regions; 45.9 million individuals), the researchers found that the overall prevalence of obesity in children and adolescents was 8.5 percent. Prevalence varied across countries, ranging from 0.4 percent (Vanuatu) to 28.4 percent (Puerto Rico). Countries with Human Development Index scores of ≥ 0.8 and [high-income countries](#) or regions had a higher prevalence of obesity among children and adolescents. There was a 1.5-fold increase in the prevalence of obesity in 2012 to 2023 compared with 2000 to 2011. A high risk for depression and hypertension was seen in children and adolescents with obesity. The pooled estimate of overweight was 14.8 percent and excess weight was 22.2 percent in children and adolescents.

"Excess weight among [children](#) and adolescents was associated with a mix of inherent, behavioral, environmental, and sociocultural influences that need the attention and committed intervention of primary care professionals, clinicians, [health authorities](#), and the general public," the authors write.

More information: Xinyue Zhang et al, Global Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity in Children and Adolescents, *JAMA Pediatrics* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2024.1576](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2024.1576)

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