Daily breakfast consumption is favorably associated with obesity measures and health behaviors among adolescents living in eight major cities in the GCC countries

Al-Hazzaa, H*; Al-Sobayel, H; Abahussain, N; Qahwaji, D; Al-Haifi, A; Desoki, T; Kilani, H; Musaiger, A; Kerkadi, A

1King Saud University; 2Education Ministry; 3King Abdulazia University; 4College of Health Sciences; 5Sultan Qaboos University; 6Arab Center for Nutrition; 7Qatar University

Objective: Daily consumption of breakfast is associated with better foods choice and inversely relates to childhood obesity. The purpose of this study was to investigate the associations of daily breakfast consumption with obesity measures and health behaviors among adolescents living in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

Methods: This study is part of the Arab Teens Lifestyle Study (ATLS), a school based, cross-sectional lifestyle project involving Arab adolescents. The present analysis included 6281 secondary-school students (50.6% females) aged 14–20 years (mean age = 16.5 years), randomly selected from eight major cities in the GCC countries, using a multistage stratified cluster sampling technique. Anthropometric and self-reported lifestyle data were obtained from the participants. Adolescents were classified into two groups based on daily or less than daily breakfast intake.

Results: Findings from MANCOVA tests controlling for age showed that adolescents consuming daily breakfast (7 days/week) had significantly (p < 0.001) lower obesity indices (waist circumference, BMI and waist to height ratio) and total screen time, higher total energy expenditure (METs-min/week), sleep duration and intakes of vegetables, fruit and milk and lower intakes of fast foods and energy drinks than adolescents not consuming breakfast daily (mean (SD) intake = 2.3 (2.0) days/week).

Conclusion: Adolescents consuming daily breakfast appeared to engage in a cluster of healthy behavior.