Global Perspectives of Childhood Obesity: Exploring Thai Nurses’ Knowledge and Attitudes

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Introduction

Background and Significance
- Childhood obesity has increased globally
- Knowledge and attitudes of childhood obesity may vary across cultures
- Childhood obesity and type 2 diabetes have increased in Thailand
- Little is known about Thai nurses’ knowledge and attitudes about childhood obesity
- Understanding about Thai nurses’ perceptions of childhood obesity could provide additional strategies for ensuring a high quality nursing practice

Purpose
- To explore Thai nurses’ knowledge and attitudes regarding childhood obesity

Method

Design
- Study is part of a large research project
- Descriptive
- Cross-sectional

Conceptual Framework
- Brofenbrenner’s Social-Ecological Model

Sample
- Convenience sample
- N = 497; n = 486 had completed surveys which were used for analysis
- Registered nurses

Location
- Public Hospital in Thailand
- School of Nursing in Thailand

Instruments
- Questionnaire
  - Attitudes Toward Obese Persons Scale: Children’s version
  - Adapted from Attitudes Towards Obese Persons (ATOP) and Beliefs (BAOP) Scale (Allison, 1995); CVI: 0.99
  - Confirmatory factor analysis: Factor loadings consistent with original scales
  - 26 item, Likert Scale
- Asian BMI classifications used in analysis (classifications non specific to any age group)

Data Analysis
- ANOVA
- Cross-tabulation

Thai Translated Version
- Cronbach’s alpha for ATOP= 0.686
- Cronbach’s alpha for BAOP= 0.391

Findings

Nurses’ Level of Education

Nurses’ BMI

- Underweight <18.5
- Normal Weight 18.5 - <23
- Overweight 23 - 27.5
- Obese >27.5

Nurses’ Age

- 20-29 yrs: 16%
- 30-39 yrs: 31%
- 40-49 yrs: 25%
- 50-60 yrs: 28%

Nurses’ Perceive that Children Who Are Overweight Have the following Attributes

Conclusion
- A majority of Thai nurses perceived childhood obesity was caused by dietary excess, physical activity deficits, or behavioral issues
- A majority of the Thai nurses perceived that overweight children were confident, sociable and as happy as other children
- BMI level used to identify a child as overweight in Thailand is lower than the BMI level used in the U.S

Implications
- Recognizing Thai nurses’ knowledge and attitudes toward childhood obesity is helpful for further development of programs and strategies for addressing childhood obesity in Thailand

Further Research
- Examine nurses’ knowledge and attitude about childhood obesity from multiple cultural and global perspectives
- Explore the impact of nurses’ perceptions of childhood obesity on clinical practice
- Find a reliable tool similar to the BAOP but in Thai language

Discussion

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