

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BREAKFAST CEREAL CONSUMPTION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF OVERWEIGHT AND/OR OBESITY IN ADOLESCENTS AGED 13-19 YEARS OF AGE IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH OF TRINIDAD.**

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**Background:** The prevalence of overweight and/ or obesity in adolescents is increasing at an alarming rate and breakfast cereals may have an inverse relationship with overweight and/ or obesity.

**Objective:** The aim of this study is to find out if there is a relationship between breakfast cereal consumption and the development of overweight and/ or obesity in selected secondary school students in south of Trinidad.

**Design:** The study population was secondary school students aged 13-18 years from the Barrackpore West Secondary School and Debe High School in south Trinidad. Participants consisted of 49 females and 51 males respectfully. The study population was chosen by simple random selection and the instrument utilized for this study was a questionnaire made up of 18 questions consisted. Data collection started from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2013. SPSS 12.0 for windows was used to analyze the data collected.

**Results:** Results revealed that 21.6% of males were overweight and 27.5% were obese. In contrast, 29% of females were obese and 17% were overweight showing that adolescent girls are at higher risks for development of overweight and/ or obesity. More than half (69%) of the study population were involved in physical activity sometimes whereas, 16% were physically active always with the remaining 23% were not physically active. Participants who are physically active sometimes, their BMI was in the healthy to overweight range and some fall in the obese category.

**Conclusion:** Consumption of breakfast cereals does lead to overweight and/ or obesity depending on many factors such as: physical activity levels, portion size and the type consumed. There is need for health promotion and intervention programs to be put in place for reduction of this epidemic.