

# Prevalence of Obesity in Preschool Children at Hilla/Babylon/Iraq 2020

Dear Editor,

In July–December 2023 issue of the *Mustansiriya Medical Journal*, Kadhim<sup>[1]</sup> used body mass index (BMI) curves of the World Health Organization (WHO) to study obesity/overweight prevalence and related factors among preschool children in Hilla, Babylon Governorate, Iraq. They found that the prevalence of obesity and overweight was 5.9% and 14.8%, respectively. The presence of obesity in other family members and family income were the major factors affecting childhood obesity.<sup>[1]</sup> The following study limitation could be appended to the few limitations mentioned by Kadhim,<sup>[1]</sup> which might importantly debate the study results. Childhood obesity/overweight has emerged as a serious public health concern in the current century and its prevalence is steadily mounting globally due to a variety of reasons. To categorize children as obese or overweight, their BMI should be depicted on the corresponding age and gender BMI curves. In research and clinical setups, three BMI curves are widely used to assess pediatric obesity/overweight. These include WHO curves, International Obesity Task Force (IOTF) curves, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) curves. Anecdotal studies have delineated substantial disagreements among these international BMI curves in precisely measuring obesity/overweight prevalence.<sup>[2-4]</sup> It needed to be more explicit why Kadhim<sup>[1]</sup> referred in the study methodology to the WHO BMI curves rather than the CDC or IOTF BMI curves as using WHO BMI curves could overestimate pediatric obesity/overweight prevalence.<sup>[5]</sup> Thus, referring to the other BMI curves is expected to yield different study findings. Taking aside the study limitations, the reported high overweight (14.8%) and obesity (5.9%) prevalence in the study population urges the need to implement serious measures to counteract the future adverse consequences of obesity as children march into adulthood.<sup>[6]</sup>

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## Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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