AIM: The relationship between body image and eating attitudes of secondary school students

Background. Body image can have a wide range of psychological effects and physical effects. Relationship between body image and eating attitude has been reported. Aim of this research is to examine the relationship between secondary school students’ body image and eating attitudes.

METHOD: The sample of the research was composed of 485 secondary school students. The research data were collected using a questionnaire, the Body Image Test and the Eating Attitude Test and evaluated with SPSS 17 package program using descriptive statistics, analysis of variance (ANOVA), Kruskal Wallis, independent t test, Mann Whitney U, Pearson Correlation.

RESULTS: The average age of the students participating in the study was 16.1±1.1 years. Forty six percent of the research group were boys. 25.4% of the students Body Mass Index (BMI) were below 18.5 kg/m2 between (underweight), 66.6% were 18.5 and 24.9 kg/m2 (normal) and 8.0% were above 25 kg/m2 (over weighted/obese). 23.9% of the students supposed that they were underweighted and 22.1% over weighted/fat. 17% of the students wanted to put on weight and 40.8% to lose weight. Positive correlation between eating attitude score and body image score was determined. Body image score and eating attitudes score of girls were lower than boys.

CONCLUSION: As a result of this research, it was seen that there was a relationship between eating behaviors of secondary school students and body image, students used methods to lose weight because of their low body image and applied these methods being influenced by people who were not experts. People should be informed to achieve healthy and balanced nutrition in their lives instead of being promoted to have diet.

Key words: Body image, eating attitude, adolescence