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Boffins unveil new test for assessing children's, teens' fitness

Albuquerque Express
Friday 28th May, 2010
(ANI)

Spanish researchers have validated a new test for assessing children's and teenagers' fitness to prevent morbidity.

This research was developed by Dr. Enrique Garcia Artero, from the Department of Physiology of the University of Granada, and coordinated by Professor Manuel J. Castillo Garzón.

For the study, 3,000 Spanish teenagers, 3,500 European teenagers and an additional sample of 126 teenagers from Granada were studied.

The tests validated by Garcia Artero included a 40-meter race, handgrip strength, the long jump with feet together, body mass index, waist circumference and skin folds, which can be easily implemented by the PE teacher.

According to the researcher, "these tests are perfectly valid and reliable for assessing the aerobic capacity, muscular strength and body composition in children and adolescents."

Both aerobic capacity and muscle strength are identified as separate cardiovascular risk factors in adolescents.

Moreover, the researcher states "teenagers' physical fitness is not only affected by overweight and obesity, but also by a low weight."

Their study further suggests that a long breastfeeding period may be associated with greater muscular fitness in the lower body during adolescence.

Although the issue of overweight and obesity among children has been studied and published on extensively, scientists from the University of Granada found that the rate of teenagers with excessively low weight is higher than expected (3.9 per cent among boys and 4.8 per cent among girls).

In fact, among girls, this percentage was higher than that of obesity (3.0 per cent).

Enrique Garcia Artero states that this finding has social importance "since it provides relevant information on the teenagers' physical condition, and its relation to their health.

Unlike adults, it is easy to instil a healthy lifestyle in children and teenagers.

Firstly, because their personality, interests and habits are not still formed, so they are not as resistant to change as adults.

And secondly, because we have the best environment to model their habits: the educational system (school and high school)". (ANI)



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