Parenting Self-Efficacy and Anthropometric Indexes in Children under Two Years, Iran-2022

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Parenting self-efficacy (PSE) refers to parents' beliefs and attitudes regarding their ability to effectively perform parenting tasks. PSE is considered one of the most critical factors in children's mental and physical health. Children's anthropometric characteristics are the essential scale for measuring children's physical growth and also a significant factor in a child's physical and mental health in the future. Therefore, we investigated the effect of PSE on anthropometric characteristics and physical growth of children under two years of age in Iran.

Methods and Materials: This comprehensive cross-sectional investigation, conducted in 2022 in Takestan, Iran, aiming to assess PSE in 300 parents of children under two years old. Families filled out a demographic questionnaire and a PSE questionnaire containing 16 questions on efficacy, satisfaction, and interest using a six-point Likert scale. Average scores for PSE were provided, and reliability coefficients for the questionnaire subscales were reported. We divided families into two groups based on desirable self-efficacy levels and analyzed differences in demographic and anthropometric variables between the groups. The variable measurement tool used in our study had both validity and reliability, ensuring the robustness of our findings. The resulting data were meticulously analyzed using SPSS software, yielding mean ± SD for normally distributed data and chi-square (χ^2) values.

Results: The results revealed the mean efficacy, satisfaction, and interest scores of 1.93, 3.09, and 2.02, respectively. Importantly, we found no significant correlation between parents' employment status and children's weight, but a significant association was observed between living location (urban or rural) and children's weight. However, the relationship between living location and weight-for-height was insignificant. Most notably, we found that the weight-for-height of the children was not correlated with the PSE, indicating a complex relationship between these factors. It is also worth noting that parents in Takestan, Iran, reported lower PSE levels compared to those in developed countries.

Conclusion and Discussion: Our study demonstrates no significant association between PSE scores and children's weight status. The studied population had lower PSE scores compared to advanced nations, a finding that may have implications for specific aspects of child development and parenting practices. Therefore, we strongly advocate for a larger sample size and the inclusion of samples from other cities in further studies. We recommend conducting additional investigations in this field, considering other possible influential factors, such as physical activity, diet, and genetics, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Keywords: Children, Parent-child relationship, Self-efficacy

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