SUMMARY

The prevalence of child obesity in the Czech Republic has increased in the last several years, especially among school-aged children. While obesity trends are closely monitored in the Czech Republic, very little is known about the dietary habits and exercise behaviors of Czech children. The purpose of this study was to evaluate nutrient intakes and physical activity, as well as identify predictors of BMI-for-age in a sample of Czech school-aged children. Ninety-seven fourth, fifth and sixth graders and their parents from two large Czech cities participated in the study. Two 24-hour recalls provided total amount of energy, fat, percentage of energy derived from fat, dietary fiber, and servings of fruits and vegetables. Physical activity was measured by the Self-administered Physical Activity Checklist (SAPAC). Children consumed less energy and dietary fiber than suggested by Czech dietary recommendations. The proportion of energy that children consumed from fat was 28.5%. Children consumed 1.4 cups of fruit and 1.2 cups of vegetables. Children’s physical activity levels fell within the current recommendations. Age was the only significant predictor of higher BMI-for-age. Poor dietary quality may be responsible for increasing rates of child obesity in the Czech Republic. Nutritional professionals in the Czech Republic should focus on increasing consumption of fruits, vegetables, and other high-fiber foods in order to reduce the risk for overweight among Czech children.

Key words: child obesity, Czech Republic, dietary habits, physical activity, BMI-for-age

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