

## Mental health of students who think they are too fat

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**Statement of the Problem:** The school age is characterised by increasing levels of body-related concerns. There is need for more evidence about how weight perception is associated with mental health. Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: We analysed data from the 2022 Health Behavior in School-aged Children, Croatian representative sample. Anonymous and voluntary survey of 873 boys and 890 girls age 11, 958 boys and 981 girls age 13, and 748 boys and 887 girls age 15; Pearson's Chi-square and binary logistic regression was used. Findings: 23,1% boys and 21,2% girls age 11 ( $p=0,354$ ), 23,5% boys and 29,9% girls age 13 ( $p=0,002$ ) and 21,9% boys and 32,6% girls age 15 ( $p<0,001$ ) think they are too fat (a bit + much too fat). In comparison to students who think they are too fat, students who don't think they are too fat have higher odds to feel active and vigorous (boys age 11 OR=1,34, CI 1,11-1,64,  $p=0,002$ ; boys age 13 OR=1,41, CI 1,17-1,70,  $p<0,001$ ; boys age 15 OR=1,38, CI 1,11-1,73,  $p=0,004$ ; girls age 15 OR=1,20, CI 1,01-1,7  $p=0,035$ ), higher odds not to feel nervous (girls age 11 OR=1,26, CI 1,07-1,51,  $p=0,007$ ; girls age 13 OR=1,17, CI 1,01-1,36,  $p=0,040$ ; girls age 15 OR=0,80, CI 0,64-0,99,  $p=0,042$ ; girls age 15 OR=1,36 CI 1,14-1,63,  $p=0,001$ ), higher odds to feel low (girls age 13 OR=1,23, CI 1,07-1,42,  $p=0,004$ ), higher odds to feel cheerful (girls age 11 OR=1,28, CI 1,02-1,61,  $p=0,037$ ; girls age 15 OR=1,36, CI 1,14-1,63,  $p=0,035$ ), lower odds to have higher BMI (boys age 11 OR=0,69, CI 0,64-0,74,  $p<0,001$ ; girls age 11 OR=0,67, CI 0,63-0,72,  $p<0,001$ ; boys age 13 OR=0,63, CI 0,63-0,59,  $p<0,001$ ; girls age 13 OR=0,68, CI 0,64-0,73,  $p<0,001$ ; boys age 15 OR=0,64, CI 0,59-0,69,  $p<0,001$ ; girls age 15 OR=0,63, CI 0,59-0,68,  $p<0,001$ ). Conclusion & Significance: Thinking that you are too fat can result in unfavourable emotions. Mental health support is needed.

## Biography

Luka Simetin is a fifth-grade student of the University of Zagreb Medical School. He is interested in various aspects of health behaviors and their influence on health outcomes

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