

Abstract

The current study examines the prevalence of different weight control behaviors and their psychosocial and physical health correlates among Chinese adolescents in Hong Kong. Secondary school students, 489 boys and 2088 girls, reported their weight characteristics, weight control efforts and specific weight reduction behaviors, and completed measures assessing self-esteem, fear of negative evaluation, depression, and physical symptoms. Results indicate that although the desire for weight change clearly existed in Hong Kong adolescents, weight control behaviors were only fairly prevalent in girls and infrequent in boys. In general, a negative pattern of psychosocial functioning and physical health was found in girls who were currently trying to lose weight, and girls who had attempted to reduce weight in the past. Similar findings were not observed in girl weight maintainers, girl weight gainers, and in boys. In addition, different weight control methods were associated with different degree of psychological and physical symptoms in both male and female weight reducers. The results suggested that the relationship between weight control and health vary according to the severity of weight control behaviors.