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Results

Among 678 children who participated in the baseline assessment, 77.9% had normal weight, 14.3% were underweight, 5.5% overweight, and 2.4% obese. Most (92.6%) of the children met the WHO recommendation of at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) per day. Children who did not meet MVPA recommendations were nearly three times more likely to be obese than those who did. No significant associations were found between physical activity and cognitive performance, as well as between nutritional status and cognitive ability.

Conclusion

While most children in this rural Tanzanian setting met physical activity recommendations and had normal weight, insufficient activity was associated with a higher risk of obesity. The lack of association with cognitive outcomes suggests that other contextual factors may influence cognitive development. Further research is needed to understand these dynamics in rural LMIC contexts.

Keywords

Cognitive performance, health, nutritional status, physical activity, school children, Tanzania, wellbeing

Biography

Fahad S. Mwakalebela is a Public Health Researcher and District Nutrition Officer in Tanzania's Ministry of Health. He holds a Master's in Public Health Research from Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST) and Ifakara Health Institute of Research (IHI), and a Bachelor's in Human Nutrition from Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA). His research on physical activity, nutrition, and cognitive performance among school children in Tanzania has gained national recognition and contributed to health policy dialogue. He is the Founder of FM Nutricare Clinic and Co-founder of Afya Bora Organization, both focused on community health and disease prevention through education and grassroots initiatives.