

CHILDHOOD OBESITY

SURVEILLANCE INITIATIVE

(COSI)

FORMER YUGOSLAV
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA



Around one in three boys and girls in primary schools are overweight.

Only one in three schools are free from advertising and marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages.

Nutrition and physical activity environments in many schools can be improved.

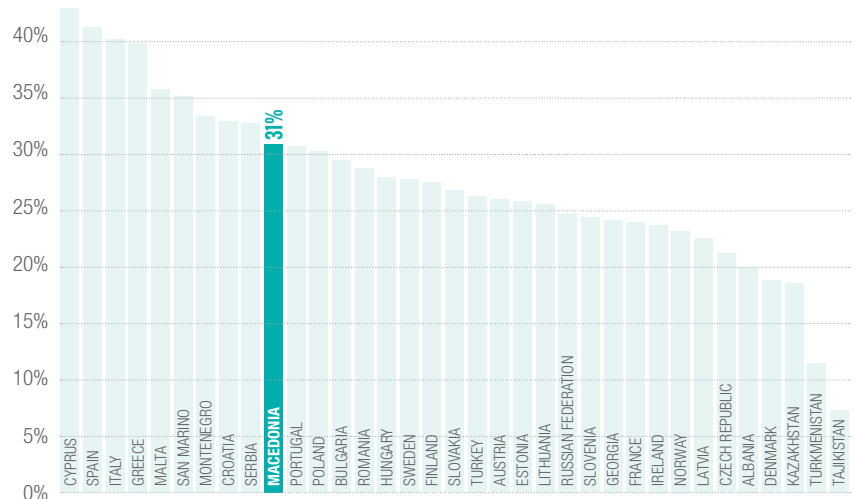
Time for physical education classes could be increased nationally.

Both boys and girls outside of the Skopje region are more likely to be overweight or obese.

The WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (or COSI) is a unique system that for over 10 years has measured trends in overweight and obesity among primary school aged children. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia first joined COSI in 2009/2010, and joined over 40 countries in the fourth round of the study in 2015/2016 to continue to collect high quality and comparable data on childhood overweight and obesity.

Overweight prevalence in 7-9-year-old schoolchildren, comparison by countries. Figures refer to 7-year-old children in all countries but in the following: Albania, Austria, Croatia, France, Italy, Norway, Poland, Romania, San Marino and Sweden (8-year-olds); Cyprus and Kazakhstan (9-year-olds). Russian Federation participated with data only for Moscow. Prevalence estimates are based on 2007 WHO recommended growth reference for school-age children and adolescents. According to WHO definition, overweight includes obesity.

Source: WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative 2015-2017; Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2015/2016; Ministry of Health of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 2018



Girls



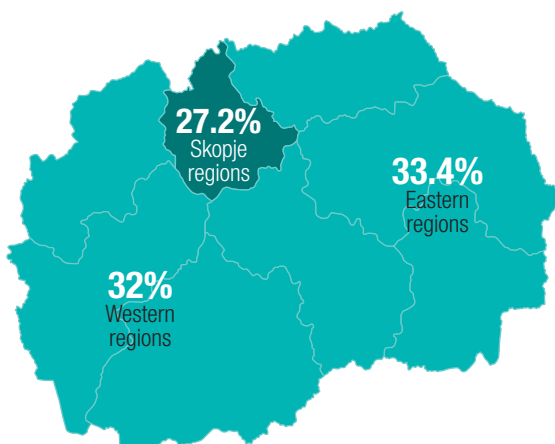
2.7% thinness
67.8% normal weight
16.6% pre-obesity
12.9% obesity

Boys

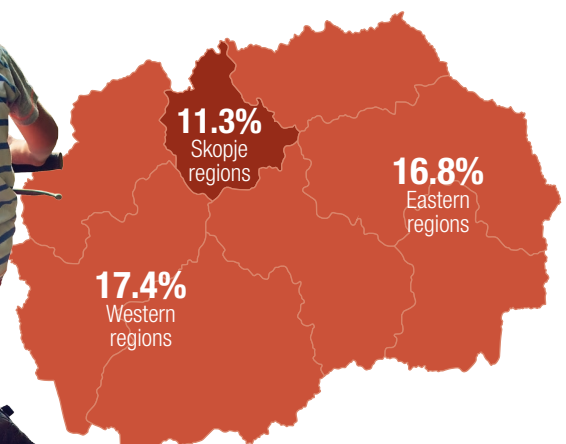


4.7% thinness
63.1% normal weight
14.9% pre-obesity
17.3% obesity

Overweight (including obesity)

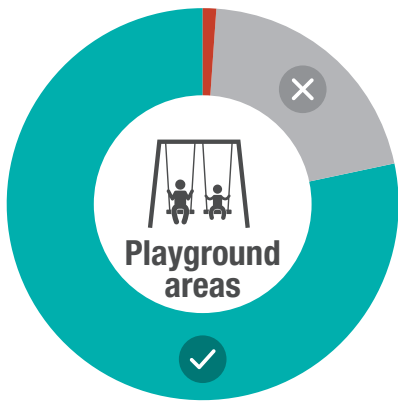


Obesity



SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT RELATING TO EATING HABITS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

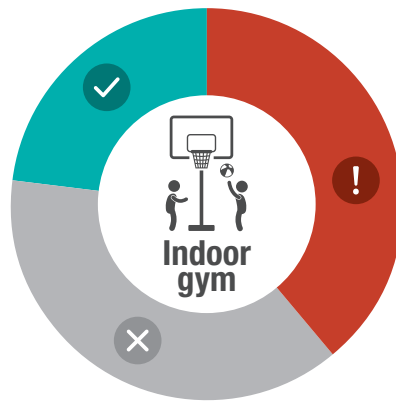
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ENVIRONMENT



❗ **1.9%** Schools without playground areas

✘ **20.4%** Schools with playground areas that are not available for use outside of school hours

✔ **77.7%** Schools with playgrounds available for use outside of school hours



❗ **39%** Schools without indoor gym

✘ **38.2%** of schools do not have indoor gyms available for use outside of school hours

✔ **22.8%** of schools have indoor gyms available for use outside school hours



In the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia all children attend physical education lessons for

120 minutes per week

Primary schools that organize sport/physical activities for children outside of school hours

37%

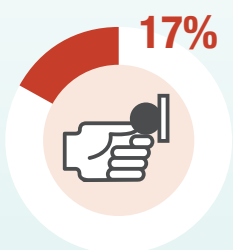
NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT

31.2%

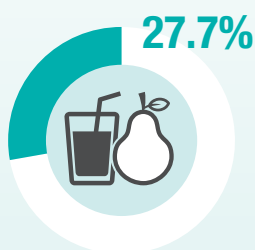
of schools are free from advertising and marketing of any energy-dense and nutrient-poor foods and beverages that could undermine the promotion of a healthy, balanced diet

97%

Nutritional education included in school curriculum



Schools with vending machines where children are allowed to purchase foods or beverages (other than water, fruits and vegetables)

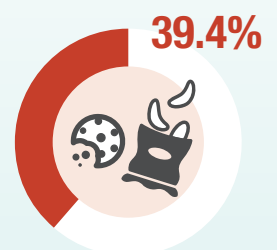


Schools where fresh fruit or 100% juices with no added sugar can be obtained on the school premises



Schools where drinks containing added sugar* can be obtained on the school premises

*"Fruit juices or other non-carbonated drinks containing added sugar" OR "Carbonated (soft) drinks containing added sugar"



Schools where sweet or savoury snacks* can be obtained on the school premises

*"Sweet snacks (e.g. chocolate, sugar confectionery, cakes, breakfast and/or cereal bars, sweet biscuits and/or pastries)" OR "Ice-cream" OR "Savoury snacks (e.g. potato crisps, salted popcorn, salted nuts, savoury biscuits and/or pretzels)"

PROMOTION OF A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

81.5%

Schools with initiatives or projects to promote a healthy lifestyle



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POLICY IMPLICATIONS

School nutrition and physical activity environments can be improved to tackle the high levels of childhood obesity in all Regions of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. A roadmap to ensure better diets and more physical activity in schools, agreed with all relevant stakeholders, could help to guide concerted action.

There is an opportunity to increase the proportion of schools free from advertising and marketing of all energy-dense and nutrient-poor foods and beverages that can undermine the promotion of a healthy and balanced diet. Following successful developments in other countries, it is important that action is taken in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to reduce the availability of sugary drinks as well as sweet and savory snacks in schools. While it is encouraging that two hours of physical education classes are provided each week, they could be increased to internationally advised levels.

Another effective way to increase opportunities for physical activity would be for schools to make their playgrounds and gyms available for use by children in the community outside of school hours. In addition, delivering sport and physical activity programmes outside of school hours and on weekends can increase the number and variety of opportunities to be physically active.

During the next round of COSI data collection, it would be useful if the family record form is used to collect additional information on the diet and physical activity habits of children, providing a more comprehensive picture of the situation in the country and enabling the design and implementation of effective policies to reduce childhood obesity.

Useful links

<http://www.who.int/countries/mkd/en/>

<https://gateway.euro.who.int/en/country-profiles/the-former-yugoslav-republic-of-macedonia/>

<http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/nutrition/activities/who-european-childhood-obesity-surveillance-initiative-cosi>

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