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**THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL ASPECT OF OBESITY IN  
ADOLESCENTS IN SERBIA**

**Abstract:** Obesity in children and adolescents is rapidly increasing sociomedical problem. In 2006 there were 11,6% and 6,4% overweight and obese children and adolescents in Serbia, respectively. It is for 3,4% and 2,0% respectively more than six years ago, especially in non developed regions of the country. Obesity has monogenic and polygenic hereditary pattern, while epigenetic phenomena, psychological and socio-economic factors are also involved. Epigenetic phenomena are the most influential in fetal period and these changes in gene expression determine obesity in later life and are transmitted to offspring. Investigation of nutrition habits of young people in Serbia points to unhealthy feeding habits (lack of intermediate meals, insufficient milk, fruit and vegetable ingestion, favoring white flour bread) and low physical exercise (TV, computers, music listening, low sport activity). Since body scheme is important for self respect in young age, obese children and adolescents have poor body esteem. Obese adolescents are more prone to anxiety and depression, drugs and alcohol abuse ad promiscuity. Self-inflicting acts and suicides are more frequent in this population. Obese children and adolescents are more exposed to peer teasing, aggression and social unacceptance, thus inducing hyperphagia and closing the circle. This stigma has long-life consequences on school perforation, education, professional life and marriages. Obesity is non transmissible disease that has extensive co-morbidity and leads to increased mortality rate. Prevention of obesity is the among most important aims in pediatric health care, school programmes and professionals involved.

**Key words:** obesity, adolescence, sociomedical issue