

LOW BACK PAIN IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENT PHASE: CONSEQUENCES, PREVALENCE, RISK FACTORS AND PREVENTIVE PROGRAM

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Low back pain (LBP) has become a growing public health problem in adolescents, presenting a relatively high prevalence during school age. Several studies verified the prevalence of annual LBP in the world and the values varied between 13% and 51%. In southern Portugal, 966 adolescents were evaluated, aged between 10 and 16 years and the results revealed that 15.7% of students had LBP at the present time, 47.2% had experienced it in the last year and 62.1% had lifetime prevalence of LBP (Minghelli et al., 2014). LBP represents a significant negative impact, being commonly associated with the demand for health care, medication use, increasing absenteeism and with a decrease in quality of life. Because of that, the presence of LBP can lead to very high economic consequences, both due to direct financial costs and due to absenteeism. Several factors may be involved in the pathogenesis of LBP, such as genetic, psychosocial, physiological, anthropometric and environmental, among them ethnicity, age, sex, smoking, obesity, physical activity practice, sedentary activities such as television watching and computer use, adoption of wrong postures and incorrect transportation and excess weight in school backpacks. Minghelli et al. study found that students who sit with the spine incorrectly positioned presented 2.49 (95% CI: 1.91-3.2, $p < 0.001$) greater probability of having LBP, and students using improper positions for watching TV or playing games have 2.01 (95% CI: 1.55-2.61, $p < 0.001$) greater probabilities compared to those who adopted correct postures. Physiotherapy in the school health field emerges with the objective of promoting knowledge and health conditions in this specific area of LBP and postural changes, optimizing the technical and personal skills of teachers and students, and developing individual and collective health potential. The performance of the Physiotherapist in schools should involve a salutogenic approach in order to create in schools a stimulating environment of creativity and a critical sense, and not just an intervention aiming at changes in risk factors. Empowerment, capacity and motivation must be given so that adolescents and the entire school community are responsible for their own health choices. This presentation will show a preventive physiotherapy program at the school, through health education sessions and modifications of the school environment.

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