

June 18-19, 2018
Paris, FranceJ Clin Nutr Diet 2018 Volume: 4
DOI: 10.4172/2472-1921-C1-003

DIETARY PATTERNS IDENTIFIED AMONG BRAZILIAN SCHOOLCHILDREN: A LATENT PROFILE ANALYSIS APPROACH

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Objective: To identify dietary patterns by latent profile analysis (LPA) among Brazilian school children attending public schools.

Methods: Food consumption data from 6,379 school children attending public schools in the city of Floianopolis was obtained using the Web-CAAFE (Food Intake and Physical Activity of Schoolchildren) questionnaire, a web-based instrument that examines food consumption and physical activity during the previous day. Latent profile indicators were the frequency of consumption of 32 food/beverages items, in times per day. LPA was used to assign the children to the most likely latent profiles based on their food consumption.

Results: Three latent profiles were identified: 1) Traditional pattern (39.7% of the children), with a significantly elevated probability of consuming rice, vegetables, green leaves, beans, manioc flour, meat, fruits, bread and biscuits and dairy products; 2) Monotonous pattern (39.3% of the children), with a significant probability of consuming pasta, instant noodles and pizza/hamburger/hot-dog, and 3) High diversity pattern (21% of the children), with a significantly higher probability of eating a variety of foods, healthy or not, such as corn and potatoes, French fries, breakfast cereals, soda, sweets, chips snacks, vegetables, green leaves, milk, yoghurt and fruits. A higher proportion of boys presented a monotonous dietary pattern (43.6%, CI 95%, 41.9-45.3 vs. 35.0%, CI 95%, 33.3-36.6) and a higher proportion of girls presented a traditional pattern (45.0%, CI 95%, 43.2-46.7 vs. 34.5%, CI 95%, 32.9-36.2).

Conclusions: The present study offered insights about the use of LPA for describing the eating patterns of Brazilian school children. Three patterns were identified: traditional, monotonous and high diversity.

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