

Abstrakt

Introduction: We have still too little information on the diagnostic, therapeutic procedures and nutritional risks of eating disorders in preschool children. Picky or evasive eating behavior can significantly affect the health and quality of life not only of the child, but also of his parents.

Aim: The aim of this thesis was to identify possible risk factors that contribute to the development of eating disorders in preschool children.

Methods: This is a questionnaire-type research work, carried out on individual cases, in which 21 preschool children with a psychiatrist-confirmed eating disorder were followed and then compared with a group of healthy children, paired by age and gender. The results were statistically processed in the STATISTIKA 12 software and MS EXCEL.

Sample: The research group consisted of 21 children with eating disorders, a control group of 22 healthy children, paired by age and gender with the research group. Participants were selected using a simple deliberate selection based on availability and voluntariness.

Results: The most significant risk factors, that may contribute to eating disorders (ED) in preschool children, were shorter period of exclusive breastfeeding, lower maternal weight gain during pregnancy, and psychiatric illness in the family. Mothers of children with ED were also more likely to have risky pregnancy habits, such as alcohol and nicotine use. Feeding problems in children with eating disorders often appeared in the first 6 months of age, another risk factor for the development of ED was undergoing acute infectious gastroenteritis. Statistically significant differences were found in the diet and eating behavior of children with ED. In the group of children with eating disorders, pathologically elevated triglyceride levels, borderline levels of total cholesterol, HDL and LDL cholesterol were found in 2 children.

Conclusion: Shorter period of exclusive breastfeeding, lower maternal weight gain during pregnancy or psychiatric burden in the family appear to be possible risk factors that may contribute to ED in preschool children. The use of certain addictive substances during pregnancy may also play a role, although the monitored mothers did not have a systematic use. Acute gastroenteritis had a significant impact on changes in eating habits and preferences in children. Families of children with ED had significantly different eating habits compared to families of children without ED. Given the heterogeneity of eating disorder diseases in children up to school start, more extensive research will certainly be needed to clarify the most significant risk factors contributing to the onset of the disease.

Key words: eating disorders, ARFID, nutritional risks, FEDIC, preschool age