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Background:

The COVID-19 outbreak has forcibly overshadowed the physical well-being of children and adolescents, of which we will see the consequences in near future. The programs to contain the spread of Sars-CoV-2 resulted in prolonged lockdown periods, discontinuity of educational services and a possible decrease in physical activities (PA) among the youngest. In the local reality of the Metropolitan City of Bologna children and adolescents underwent a radical change in habits and lifestyle, overall predisposing sedentariness and unhealthy behaviors. Our project, “Come te la passi?”, aims to acknowledge lifestyle variations (concerning diet, PA, sleep behavior/quality) to design, in second-phase interventions, individualized school-based educational programs.

Methods:

This ongoing study is being conducted using an on-line anonymous questionnaire targeting parents/guardian of children and adolescents aged 6-17 recruited from 26th to 28th of April in Bologna, a city in Northern Italy.

Results:

Preliminary data suggested that among adolescents (n = 124) 91.2% used to do PA 2 or more times a week before lockdown, while during lockdown this percentage decreased, reaching 41.1%. In children (n = 38) we observed an even more pronounced difference, with PA decreasing from 89.5% to 26.3%. In children 29% of the participants also reported a weight gain, while 65.8% did not report any variation and only 5.2% reported a weight loss. For the majority of both children’s and adolescents’ parents (n = 162), the strategies to address the reduction in PA were predominantly having school time dedicated only to PA (53.1%) and being more educated about simple physical exercises (14.5%).

Conclusions:

Our preliminary findings suggest that the current pandemic had a strong impact on the well-being of children and adolescents; “Come te la passi?” second-phase interventions could be crucial in addressing the youngest’s needs, to educate and promote healthier lifestyles through school-based programs.

Key messages:

- Children’s and adolescents’ lifestyle behaviors were strongly affected by the current pandemic, with physical activity frequency more than halved.
- “Come te la passi?” objectives are to frame the major critical issues detected and to shape educational school programs based on identified needs.

Preliminary data on physical well-being of children and adolescents during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic

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