

2014 Child Behaviors and Health in Palau Preliminary Results

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA)-supported Children's Healthy Living Program, or CHL, has been working with your community to understand the behaviors and health of children 2-8 years of age. In March-April, 2014, parents, teachers, community members, and project partners gathered data in Palau. A total of 194 children from the Republic of Palau participated in this study. Here we have some preliminary results from our joint work. With this information parents and community leaders can see where things are going well and where additional energy, leadership, and resources will need to be placed to raise the next generation of healthy, happy children.

Child sex, age, race distribution

Among the 194 children, 191 had information on sex, of which 89 (47%) were girls and 102 (53%) were boys. Furthermore, 148 (76%) were of age group 2-5 years and 46 (24%) were of age group 6-8 years. All had information on race, of which 145 (76%) were Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander (NHPI), 40 (21%) were more than one race and 6 (3%) were Asian. From NHPI children, 137 (94%) were Palauan.

Potential outliers with extreme values (defined as those with a value of 3 standard deviations (sd) above or below the mean) were excluded from this report.

Children's Body Mass Index by Category as defined by the Center for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC)

A total of 186 children were included for this analysis. Among them, 74% were healthy weight, 2% underweight, 9% overweight, and 15% were obese (Figure 1A). Among **boys**, 70% were healthy weight, 1% were underweight, 10% overweight and 19% obese (Figure 1B). Among **girls**, 79% were healthy weight, 3% were underweight, 7% overweight and 10% obese (Figure 1C).

Figure 1A. Prevalence of overweight and obesity of children from Palau (n=186)

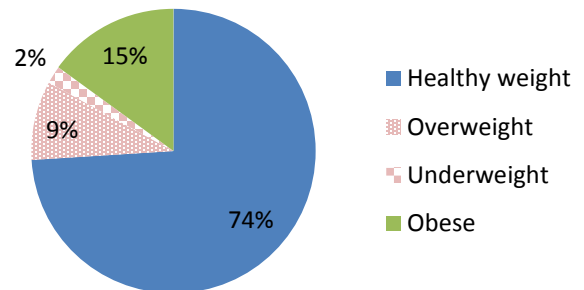


Figure 1B. Prevalence of overweight and obesity among boys from Palau (n=99)

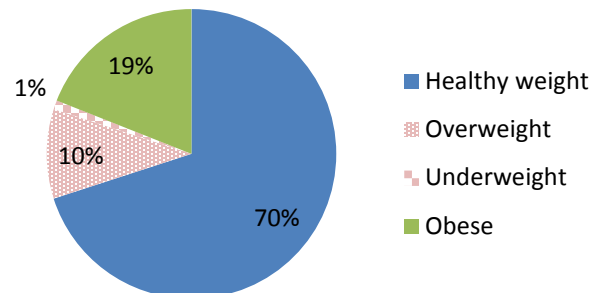
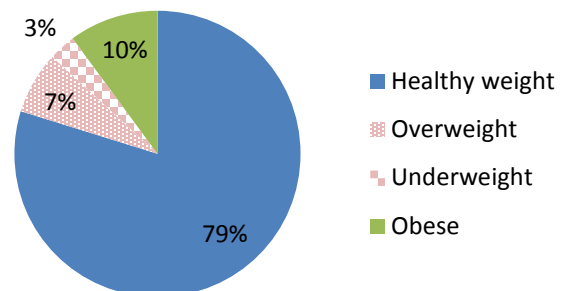


Figure 1C. Prevalence of overweight and obesity among girls from Palau (n=87)



Strategies that CHL is promoting in raising healthy children include: (1) a healthy lifestyle, which encourages children to move more, sleep more and spend less screen time; (2) a healthy diet, which encourages children to drink more water, eat more fruit and vegetables and consume fewer sugar sweetened beverages. Below we show how the children are doing on achieving some of those strategies.

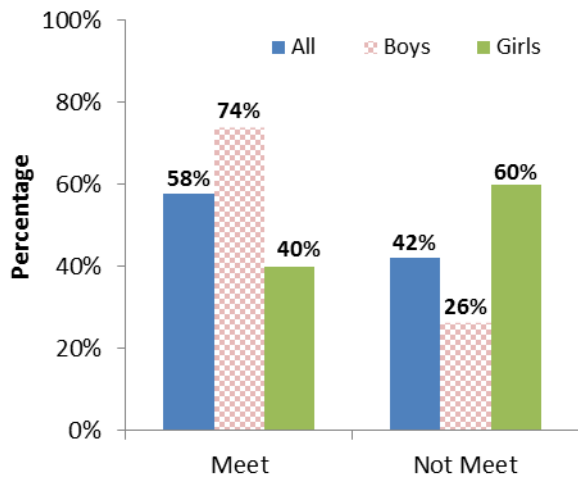
Children’s moderate and vigorous level of physical activity (MVPA) as measured by accelerometer

In each study community, children were asked to wear an accelerometer for 6 days, which records the child’s activity by each second. Average minutes per day of children’s MVPA were obtained from the accelerometer data.

In Palau, a total of 83 children had valid accelerometer data. Among those 83 children, daily average minutes of moderate and vigorous physical activity (MVPA) were 67.5 (sd=29.7).

Fifty eight percent of those 83 children met the national recommendation of 60 minutes a day of MVPA. More boys than girls were physically active (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Percentage of children in Palau meeting national recommendation of 60 minutes a day of moderate and vigorous types of physical activity



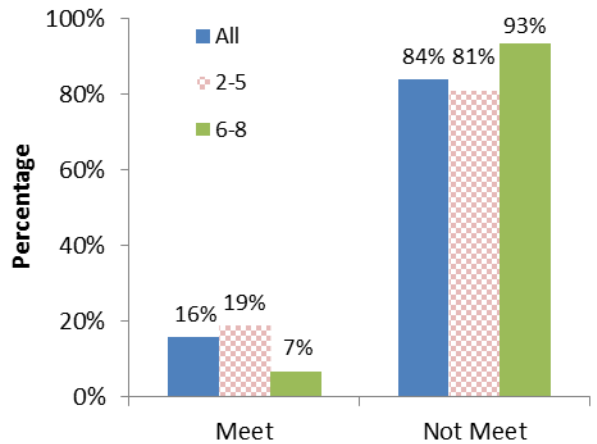
More than one third of children (42%) and over half of girls (60%) did not meet the national recommendation of 60 minutes a day of MVPA. This is an opportunity for both parents and educators to intervene to help children engage in physical activity.

Children’s screen time

A total of 194 children were included in the analysis of screen time. Among them, average screen time, such as watching TV, video games, or DVD, or playing active or inactive video games was 6.5 hours (sd=4.4).

While the national recommendation is for each child to spend 2 or less hours on screens every day, only 16% of our study children met this recommendation. More 2-5 year olds (19%) than 6-8 year olds (7%) met this recommendation (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Percentage of children in Palau meeting the national recommendation of each child to spend 2 or fewer hours of screen time every day



More than four out of five (84%) of children appear to be spending too much time watching screens! This is an opportunity for both parents and educators to intervene to help children spend less screen time.

For more information about this report or the CHL Program, contact:

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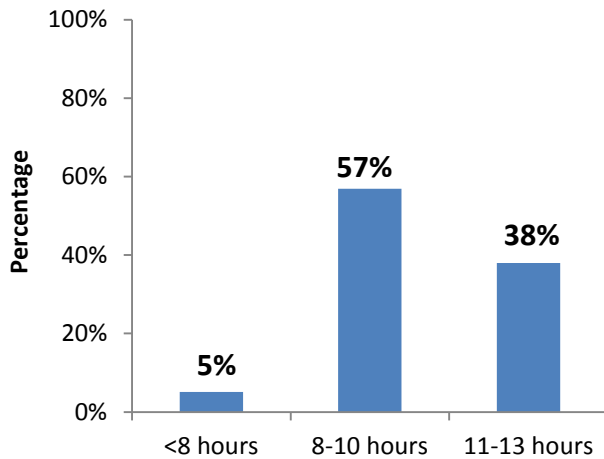
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Children's Sleep Duration

A total of 182 children were included in the analysis of sleep duration. The average number of hours of sleep per day was 9.9 (sd=1.6).

Among the 137 children 2-5 years old, 38% met the national recommendation of sleep of between 11-13 hours daily (11-13 hours in the graph). Another 57% of children slept more than 8 hours but less than 11 hours daily (8-10 hours in the graph). And 5% of children slept less than 8 hours (<8 hours in the graph) (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Percent of children 2-5 years old among 3 groups of sleep duration



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the families of participants who completed our assessments so that we could make this important information available, as well as all our community partners for working with us to improve the health of children across the Pacific.

For more about this data or the CHL Program, contact:

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