

# Self-perception of body weight among high school students in Taipei, Taiwan.

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Self-perception of body weight and other weight-related factors were assessed among 2665 Taipei, Taiwan high school students. A high percent of the girls (70.7%) and boys (42.2%) reported that they were too fat and these percentages were much higher than those reported by U.S. students in a recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey. In addition, only 13.2% of girls and 22.0% of boys reported being completely satisfied with their weight and the level of dissatisfaction with weight appeared to be greater than among U.S. students. Yet, in comparison to U.S. students, the Taiwanese students were considerably less likely than their U.S. counterparts to engage in weight management practices (e.g., dieting, eating less food, using diet pills). Taiwanese students with a self-perception of being too fat were more likely than those with perceptions of being just right or too thin to engage in weight management practices, to be dissatisfied with their weight, feel that they were unattractive, estimate that their same-sex peers were trying to lose weight, and have a higher body mass index. The findings from this study showed a relationship between self-perception of body size and engaging in weight control behaviors was consistent with other research. It suggested that self-perception of body weight, more so than objective weight status, was predictive of weight loss behavior and also negative psychological outcomes associated with poor body weight image. As a result, self-perception of weight may be an important point of focus for the design and implementation of clinical and public health initiatives targeted at this adolescent population as well as others.