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Topic: Capacity development for public health nutrition

Title: HEALTHY EATING: PERCEPTION AND PRACTICE OF ADOLESCENTS, BRAZIL

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INTRODUCTION: Food behavior is a result of decisions taken by individuals, which reflect regional food culture. The objective of this study was to verify the relationship between perception of healthy eating and feeding practice among adolescents.

METHODS: Qualitative research performed in 2013, in the city of São José dos Campos (state of São Paulo, Brazil), with adolescents from the public elementary education. The adolescents replied to the following question "In your opinion, do you have a healthy diet? Why?". We classified the answers as "yes" and "no", and then, verified the frequency of words most used in the explanations to the answers of each category. The food intake was verified by a food frequency questionnaire. Data were analyzed using the NVivo 10 and the STATA/SE 13 programs.

RESULTS: 89 students (55% males) between the ages of 9 and 12 participated in the study. 82,5% of adolescents declared having a healthy diet and the words that were most frequently used among them were: fruit, vegetable, salad and healthy. Among those who considered not having a healthy diet, the words silliness, tasty, chips and fat were mentioned with most frequency. Despite having a regular intake of healthy foods, such as beans (82.0%) and milk (63.3%), they referred low vegetable (34,1%) and fruit (37,1%) intake.

CONCLUSION: Although the adolescents say they have a healthy diet and know what a healthy diet is, we observed that the feeding practice does not always refer to what was said due to the influence of socioeconomic, psychological and environmental factors on their food choices.