

GROWTH AND NUTRITIONAL STATUS IN CHILDREN WITH CHRONIC BRONCHIAL ASTHMA

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In children with chronic bronchial asthma, physical development is affected both directly by the disease itself, and indirectly as a side effect of treatment. In the present study, physical development was assessed on the basis of the frequency of serious disturbances in growth and nutritional state. The sample included 261 children with bronchial asthma from 5 to 18 years old who were patients of the Pulmonology and Allergy Center in Karpacz, Poland. Relationships between physical growth and several factors related to the clinical picture and the course of the disease were also explored. On the basis of these results, it was possible to assess the effect of the severity and the duration of the disease on various parameters related to physical development. The parameters used in this study included height, weight, triceps skinfold thickness, sub-scapular skinfold thickness, abdominal skinfold thickness, upper arm circumference and upper arm muscle circumference. Body composition was estimated using upper arm muscle area and upper arm fat tissue area. Monitoring the course of physical growth in children with chronic asthma should be an essential element of assessing physical development. This monitoring should not be limited to only height and weight, but should include a set of somatic measurements that permit a relatively early and accurate assessment of physical growth. In this way, the appropriate therapy can be initiated in a timely fashion, thereby increasing the effectiveness of the treatment. Sensitive monitoring would also make it easier to determine to what degree disturbances in physical development are caused by the disease itself, and to what degree they are caused by the treatment used.