Poor diet creates 20cm height gap in children

11th November, 2020

Poor diet and nutrition may be behind an average height gap of 20cm between the tallest and shortest children in different countries. Researchers from Imperial College London conducted a global analysis of the Body Mass Index (BMI) of schoolchildren and adolescents around the world. This involved measuring the height and weight of millions of children and teenagers. They discovered that the world's tallest 19-year-olds, at 183.8cm, lived in the Netherlands, while the shortest, at 160.1cm, lived in East Timor. The researchers said teenagers in northwest and central Europe were the tallest in the world. On average the shortest children lived in South and South-East Asia, Latin America and East Africa.

The study was extremely comprehensive. It involved analysing data from 65 million children aged five to 19 years old in 193 countries. The researchers reported that children's height and weight varied enormously in different regions. The team warned that a lack of quality food and nutrition was a major factor behind stunted growth and a rise in childhood obesity. It said improved diets increased the average height of children in China. Nineteen-year-old boys there were 8cm taller in 2019 than in 1985. Researchers attribute this to improved nutrition. The lead author of the report urged countries to adopt policies that encouraged healthier eating, but to be aware of the perils of excessive weight gain.

Sources: *bbc.com / imperial.ac.uk / tvnz.co.nz*

Writing

It is the government's responsibility to ensure all children are well fed. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

diet / nutrition / average / height / weight / teenagers / Europe / world / children / comprehensive / children / quality / growth / diets / report / healthier eating / perils

True / False

a) Researchers said poor diet was behind nutrition in taller children. T / F

b) The researchers were from Empirical College London. T / F

c) The world's tallest 19-year-olds live in the Netherlands. T / F

d) Children in North-East Asia were the world's shortest. T / F

e) Researchers analysed data on 65 million children. T / F

f) Poor nutrition was responsible for stunted growth and obesity. T / F

g) Nineteen-year-old boys in China grew an average 8cm taller in 34 years. T / F

h) Researchers encouraged policies that encouraged weight gain. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

1.	**behind**	a.	differed
2.	**conducted**	b.	necessitated
3.	**adolescents**	c.	wide-ranging
4.	**involved**	d.	carried out
5.	**on average**	e.	take on
6.	**comprehensive**	f.	generally
7.	**varied**	g.	responsible for
8.	**urged**	h.	undue
9.	**adopt**	i.	youngsters
10.	**excessive**	j.	encouraged

Discussion – Student A

a) What do you think about what you read?

b) How much taller do you think humans can grow to be?

c) Have you ever been on a diet?

d) What policies should governments adopt to encourage healthier eating?

e) What is your government doing about obesity in your country?

f) What advice do you have for someone who is overweight?

g) What are the dangers of being obese?

h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

1. nutrition may be behind
2. conducted a global analysis of
3. schoolchildren and
4. This involved measuring
5. On
6. The study was extremely
7. weight varied
8. stunted growth and a rise
9. urged countries to
10. the perils of excessive weight

a. gain
b. the height and weight
c. in childhood obesity
d. adopt policies
e. the Body Mass Index
f. enormously
g. adolescents
h. average
i. comprehensive
j. an average height gap

Discussion – Student B

a) How good or bad is your diet?

b) How happy are you with your weight and height?

c) What do you know about the Body Mass Index?

d) What do you know about nutrition?

e) What height and weight would you like to be?

f) Do you think nutrition is better now than in the past?

g) What are the benefits of being tall?

h) What are the benefits of being short?

Spelling

1. Poor diet and nnoirtuit
2. an veaareg height gap of 20cm
3. conducted a global yaasnisl
4. schoolchildren and oatsesnlcde
5. mainguser the height and weight
6. in thswronet and central Europe
7. The study was xmrteleey comprehensive
8. It lnoivedv analysing data
9. height and weight reivad enormously
10. a rise in childhood tboyise
11. Researchers tertbuiat this to improved
12. the perils of isesexevc weight gain

Role Play

Role A – Tall
You think being tall is the best thing to be. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least desirable of these (and why): being slim, being intelligent or being loving.

Role B – Slim
You think being slim is the best thing to be. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least desirable of these (and why): being tall, being intelligent or being loving.

Role C – Intelligent
You think being intelligent is the best thing to be. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least desirable of these (and why): being slim, being tall or being loving.

Role D – Loving
You think being loving is the best thing to be. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least desirable of these (and why): being slim, being intelligent or being tall.

Speaking – Best to be…

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things to be at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Funny
- Good at English
- Forgiving
- Cooperative
- Tall
- Slim
- Intelligent
- Loving

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. i	4. b	5. f
6. c	7. a	8. j	9. e	10. h

Answers – True False

a F	b F	c T	d F	e T	f T	g T	h F

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.