



“Gheorghe Asachi” Technical University of Iasi, Romania



URBAN VERSUS RURAL: DOES THE ENVIRONMENT COUNT IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT?

Ionela Pascanu^{1,2*}, Simona Hutu², Ancuta Cota², Oana Capraru², Raluca Pop³

¹*Endocrinology Department of University of Medicine and Pharmacy Tîrgu Mures,
38 Gheorghe Marinescu Street, Tîrgu Mures, Romania*

²*Mures County Hospital, Tîrgu Mures, 38 Gheorghe Marinescu Street, Tîrgu Mures, Romania*

³*Research Methodology Department of University of Medicine and Pharmacy Tîrgu Mures,
38 Gheorghe Marinescu Street, Tîrgu Mures, Romania*

Abstract

This study is motivated by current debate about the importance of the environment as a determinant of later disease risk. Children in urban areas are considered to be more advantaged than those from rural areas due to higher standards of health, protection, education and sanitation. Our study aims to assess the differences between children from urban and rural environments with focus on auxologic parameters, comorbidities and the onset of puberty. An observational study was conducted on a random sample of 1923 children 6-14 years old, from 13 schools in Mures County, Romania. The following variables were analyzed: age, sex, environment, gestational age, weight and length at birth, mid parental height, breastfeeding period, vaccination status, associated diseases, pubertal stage, and anthropological parameters. The environment does not significantly influence the breastfeeding period. Children in rural areas have higher odds of prematurity and low birth weight, while the urban environment increases the odds of short stature, but not overweight and there is no difference between pubertal development in urban versus rural area in our region. In conclusion, when analyzing child development, the current differences between urban and rural environment need to be reconsidered.

Key words: auxology, puberty, rural, urban

Received: November, 2014; Revised final: December, 2015; Accepted: February, 2016
