Dear Editor

I read the recent publication by Montgomery-Reagan et al with great interest\textsuperscript{1}. Montgomery-Reagan et al concluded that ‘eating breakfast at home and at school and increased hours of television viewing may be associated with higher BMI, especially in younger boys\textsuperscript{1}. Indeed, the problem of obesity in rural children is a current concern, even in developing countries\textsuperscript{2}. The affordability of food and eating habits, both of which can be affected by the family’s socioeconomic status, are important factors in determining the body weight of rural children\textsuperscript{2}. It is most important to know what the children eat, and clarifying “eating at home and at school” from Montgomery-Reagan et al.’s preliminary report seems important. Even more important, however, is the discordance in findings between the US report\textsuperscript{1} and a previous report from Thailand, a developing Asian country\textsuperscript{2}. The US finding that higher income was associated with a decreased incidence of obesity is in contrast to the Thai report that found a high income to be associated with an increased incidence of obesity. The Thai study hypothesized that wealthier parents tend to provide excessive amounts of high-sugar foods for their children, and this can lead to pediatric obesity\textsuperscript{2}. It may be that there is a difference in fundamental health knowledge (in this case regarding pediatric nutrition) between parents in developed and developing countries. Indeed, an Australian study showed that eating patterns in among lower-educated populations in Aboriginal communities include greater amounts of high sugar foods, compared with a higher educated urban population\textsuperscript{3}. Further collaborative research across developed and developing countries is suggested to fully examine this issue.

Viroj Wiwanitkit, MD
Wiwanitkit House
Bangkhae, Bangkok, Thailand
References

