

OBESITY: IS IT A PROBLEM IN ADOLESCENT FEMALE STUDENTS IN ONIZAH SCHOOLS?

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ABSTRACT

Objectives

Obesity contributes significantly to morbidity and mortality rates worldwide. It is also a known health concern in Saudi Arabia, as frequently reported in various media. This study aimed at assessing the prevalence of obesity in the Al Qassim province, and to examine the effect of lifestyle factors on obesity.

Study Design

Cross sectional study

Methods

Multi-stage proportionate random sampling was used for data collection (questionnaire) obtained through random selection of female children in the age group 12 to 18 years, studying in the intermediate and secondary school of Onaizah region (January 2015 and May 2015). The Body Mass Index (BMI) of the subjects was calculated, which is an indicator of obesity. The questionnaire also covered various parameters such as food habits, frequency and duration of exercise, sleep duration etc. Prevalence of obesity was estimated using descriptive statistics, and the influence of various factors on obesity was examined using Chi Square test.

Results

Data of 100 students from 10 schools (5 primary and 5 secondary schools) in Onaizah city indicated that 23% of the students were obese. Chi square analysis showed that factors such as meal preference, frequency of meals, and frequency of exercise and duration of sleep appear to have significant influence on obesity. However, sleep pattern (whether sound or disturbed sleep) does not seem to affect obesity.

Conclusions

From the study, it appears that obesity is significantly prevalent among adolescent female students of Onaizah region. Certain lifestyle factors have significant influence on obesity. There is a need for increased awareness in the region, about obesity.

KEYWORDS: Prevalence, Obesity, Lifestyle Factors