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Prevalence of Overweight/Obesity, Anaemia and their Associations among Female University Students in Dubai, United Arab Emirates: A Cross-Sectional Study

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The present study assessed the associations of overweight, obesity and anaemia with selected lifestyle factors, total body fat and abdominal obesity among female university students in Dubai.

A total of 251 female students from a national university in Dubai participated in the present study. Weight, height, waist circumference, Hb level and total body fat percentage were measured. Participants also completed a self-reported questionnaire that included items related to the factors of obesity, anaemia and lifestyle. The study was approved by the University Ethical Committee.

Almost one-third of the participants were overweight/obese; 8.5 % had abdominal obesity while 18.1 % had anaemia. Out of the total, 71.7 % reported that they have irregular meals and the highest percentages were found among obese (89.3 %) and overweight (78.0 %) compared with normal-weight (65.4 %) students ($P < 0.05$). Overweight/ obese students reported that they exercise more than those of normal weight ($P = 0.05$). Students with anaemia reported less exercise than students without anaemia ($P = 0.05$). Also, the percentage of total body fat was found to be the highest (38.9 %) among students with anaemia ($P < 0.05$). Overweight, obesity and anaemia are prevalent among female university students.

Anaemia seems to be associated with the percentage of total body fat, lack of physical activity and junk food. Further studies are required to investigate the detailed dietary habits of overweight and obese young adult females with anaemia.

Biography:

Haleama Al Sabbah is Associate Professor and former Chair of Health Sciences Department at Zayed University in UAE. She completed her PhD in Public Health Nutrition (PhD in Medical Sciences) in 2008 from the Faculty of Medicine, Gent University, Belgium. She awarded a doctoral scholarship from Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC). Her PhD study was part of the National Study of the Palestinian Health Behaviors in School-aged Children (HBSC-2004). Dr. Al Sabbah was a Fulbright Senior Visiting Scholar and did Post-Doctoral studies in Public Health and Nutrition at Jean Mayer Human Nutrition Center, Tufts University, Boston, USA from 2011 to 2012. She served as the director of Public Health Department, Faculty of Medicine, An-Najah University, Palestine from 2009 to 2013. Dr. Al Sabbah has published numerous number of articles in scientific journals and served as an editorial board member and reviewer for several peer-reviewed journals. Dr. Al Sabbah is regularly invited to both national and international conferences, courses and research studies in all over the world, including Europe, USA, Canada, West Africa and some Arab countries.