

Assessment of knowledge about obesity among students in a medical college in Kancheepuram district, Tamil Nadu

Shrivastava S., Shrivastava P., Ramasamy J.

Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College & Research Institute, Kancheepuram

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Overweight and obesity are the fifth leading risk for global deaths. It is not only the degree of excess fat that is important, but also its distribution in the body that determines the health risks associated with the condition. The aim of the study is to assess the knowledge of medical students pertaining to obesity.

Methods: A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted among first-year medical students in March of 2013. A universal sampling method was employed, and all first-year students were included as subjects in the study. The total sample included 138 students. After obtaining informed consent, a pre-tested semi-structured questionnaire was administered to each of the participants. Utmost care was taken to maintain privacy and confidentiality. Statistical analysis was done using SPSS version 17. Frequency distributions and percentages were calculated for all the variables.

Results: A lack of physical activity and the presence of stress were identified as the most common risk factors for obesity development. Approximately, 73(52.9%) students were of the incorrect opinion that gynaecoid obesity was more dangerous than android obesity. The most common strategy cited by 107(77.5%) respondents for prevention of obesity was regular exercise.

Conclusion: The study revealed that although the majority of the medical students were aware of the risk factors of obesity, many gaps, which need to be bridged, were identified in their knowledge. These medical students could be actively involved in awareness campaigns for delaying the onset of lifestyle diseases.

Keywords: obesity, body mass index, physical activity, cancer
