

Abstract: OBESITY PREVALENCE IN MEDICAL STUDENTS IN 2006

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Aims and objectives: This study investigates the prevalence of obesity and influencing factors among the medical students in the College of Medicine University of Lagos.

Patients and methods: One hundred and ninety-eight subjects participated in the study. This included One hundred and eleven males and 87 were females. Data was collected by means of questionnaire and anthropometric measurements using the body mass index (BMI, kg/m²)(Quetelet index).

Results: Most of the population studied fell within the age range of 20-24years (63.1%). It was observed that the majority of the subjects were within the normal range of BMI (75.8%), 9.6% were overweight and 2.5% were obese. All obese patients were in the mild category.

The average BMI was higher in females compared to males (22.304±3.4 and 21.0538 ±2.8, P<0.05).

Conclusion: The prevalence rates of overweight and obesity were low on the population and there were no significant differences between the body mass index patterns of those that were exposed to risk factors and those that were not.

Obesity may still not currently be of much concern in this environment but over all eating habits may encourage an increased incidence of overweight and obesity in the future.

Recommendation: Despite the low prevalence rate, preventive measures should be taken to avoid future rise particularly with the increased westernization of diet and reduction in facilities for physical activities.

It was recommended that public effort must focus more in preventing obesity by developing effective policies and programs. Since prevention is more cost effective than treatment.

Health education and provision of facilities for physical activities should also be made more available.