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Prevalence of obesity / overweight with the association of gender, age group and marital status among the nursing officers working at Teaching Hospital, Jaffna

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Body mass index (BMI) and waist circumference (WC) are simple tools to assess the status of obesity and obesity related, metabolic and cardio vascular disease risk status. BMI is a simple index of weight-for-height that is commonly used to classify overweight and obesity in adults. The classification for South Asian population is underweight (BMI < 18.5 kg/m^2), normal weight (BMI is between 18.5 - 24.9 kg/m^2), overweight (BMI is between 25.0 - 29.9 kg/m^2), and obesity (BMI ≥ 30.0 kg/m^2). Obesity is divided as class -1 (BMI is between 30.0 – 34.9 kg/m^2), class -2 (BMI is between 35.0 – 39.9 kg/m^2) and class -3 (BMI ≥ 40.0 kg/m^2) (WHO Expert Consultation, 2004). WC is a relatively simple and convenient measure and can be used to assess the quantity of abdominal fat. It's advisable that an individual's relative risk of obesity-related ill health can be more accurately classified using both BMI and WC than by either alone (WHO Expert Consultation, 2008). The WC cut points of increased risk for health problems of cardiovascular disease and other forms of chronic diseases, for men ≥ 90.0 cm and for women ≥ 80.0 cm in South Asian region (International Diabetes Federation criteria, 2006). An institutional based cross-sectional descriptive study was carried out at Teaching Hospital, Jaffna, among the nursing officers, where 130 were males. The response rate was 86.4% (n = 342). A self-administered questionnaire and anthro-parameters [(BMI, WC] were used in this study. The mean BMI of male and female nursing officers were 24.1 (±3.5) and 24.1 (±4.3) kg/m^2 respectively. More than 50% of the male (65) and female (123) nursing officers were of normal weight. Of the rest 154 (45%) subjects, 06 (5.1%) males and 17 (7.6%) females were under weight, 40 (33.9%) males and 63 (28.1%) females were overweight, 07 (5.9%) males and 18 (8.0%) females were of obesity class -1, and 03 (1.3%) females were of obesity class -2. WC of males and females surveyed were 88.9 (±9.8) and 86.0 (±11.1) cm respectively. Based on the studies 60 (50.8%) male and 158 (70.5%) female nursing officers had central obesity. Age range (p = 0.000), marital status (p = 0.038) of male and marital status (p = 0.021) of female nursing officers had a statistically significant relationship with WC, while BMI failed to show a statistically significant relationship.

Keywords: Body mass index, central obesity, obesity, waist circumference

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