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ABSTRACT

Body Mass Index and Lifestyle Habits as Predictors of Health in Palestinian Adults: A cross-Sectional Study

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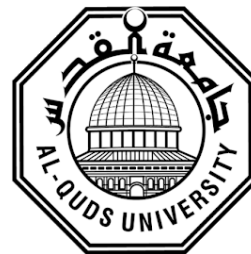
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Increasing prevalence of obesity has led to rising numbers of hypertension, dyslipidaemia, cardiovascular disease, diabetes mellitus, and other leading conditions. Poor lifestyle, in the form of poor diet and lack of proper sleep and exercise can be attributed to comorbidity and decrease in overall health. Little is known about eating habits, sleeping habits, and the prevalence of obesity in Palestinian adults. A team of trained medical-students conducted a cross-sectional study of Palestinian adults aged between 18 and 60 years old. Stratified random sample of 2500 adults is selected based on governorates, and an interview-aided questionnaire is used for data collection in addition to measures of weight, height, and waist circumference. 2106 Palestinian adults have been selected with a participation rate of 83%. Preliminary results show that the sample is 43.6% male, 56.4% female with a mean age of 33.2 years (SD=12.8). Mean calculated BMI of the sample was 26.5 (SD=5.6) with a mean height of 1.67 m (SD=0.09). Participant distribution according to living area was 39% urban, 53.7% rural, and 7.3% living in refugee camps. The majority of the sample was married (55.3%) or single (42.2%) with the rest being either divorced or widowed. 901 (42.8%) participants had at least 1 child with a mean of 4.56 (SD=2.58) children per participant. 52.3% of the sample had poor sleeping habits, 74.3% had poor eating habits, and 32.5% of the overall sample were smokers. Hypertension, diabetes, and dyslipidaemia were the most common illnesses reported with rates of 7.5%, 5.1%, and 3.4%, respectively. Conclusion: It was found that Palestinians exhibit poor eating and sleeping habits and have a large percentage of smokers. Disease prevalence was found to agree with international studies in that hypertension, diabetes, and dyslipidaemia were found to be the most common diseases. In light of this, we believe that the Palestinian population is in dire need of



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educational programmes to better improve their lifestyle in such a way that reflects on their habits and disease prevalence.

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