

ABSTRACT

OBESITY AMONG IN SCHOOL TEENAGERS, EMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

CARLA WILSON-REDDEN

Obesity is often defined as a condition of abnormal or excessive fat accumulation in adipose tissue, to the extent that health may be impaired.

The prevalence of obesity is rising to epidemic proportions around the world, at an alarming rate. The rise in obesity is not restricted to any country or region based on their particular level of development. For the purposes of this study, focus will be placed on the Caribbean and elsewhere in the region.

Obesity can be seen as a major public health issue as the presence of obesity can put one at risk, decreasing years of life and quality of life.

A sample of 180 teenagers were selected from a population of 540 teenagers attending the Windward Road Junior High (an inner-city school), of which 41% were boys and 59% were girls. Anthropometric measurements were performed to ascertain levels of obesity, including waist:hip ratio. WHO category of body mass index was used. The mean overall age 13. The overall mean weight was 59.2kg. Males was 57.1kg compared with 60.7kg for females.

The overall mean height was 159.4cms. Mean height among males was 160.2 cm compared to 158.8 cm to females. Males showed a wider variation

with respect to height. Overall BMI level was 23.3 kg/m^2 . Among males, the level was 22.2 kg/m^2 compared to 23.9 kg/m^2 among females. Z-test analysis of BMI levels among males and females showed no significant. However, females showed a wider variation in BMI levels than males. Overall 26.1% respondents were classified as being obese, 62.8% were classified as having normal weight and 11.1% as being underweight. 27.6% of the obese respondents were females compared to males.

89.3% of respondents said they did some form of physical exercise, while 10.7% did no exercise. Among males, 91.8% reported doing exercise compared to 86.7% of females. Interestingly though, 77.8% respondents classified themselves as being very active persons.

The Waist Hip Ratio and Body Mass Index measures were compared with reported physical activity and then cross tabulated.

It was found that as the BMI increase the teenagers reported indulging in three heavy meals per day. Fruit and vegetable consumption was found to be low.

Intervention strategies were developed to be implemented in this school.