

THE PREVALENCE OF OBESITY AND THE RELEVANT OBESITY RISK FACTORS
ASSOCIATED WITH UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES STUDENTS IN ST.
AUGUSTINE.

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Background: Obesity is an increasing epidemic in many nations. Obesity occurs when an individual has accumulated excess fat on the body. Risk factors of obesity are aspects that may or can lead to one becoming obese.

Objective: To determine: **(1)** the prevalence of obesity among U.W.I. St Augustine Students. **(2)** To identify some of the relevant obesity risk factors among students in U.W.I. St. Augustine Students (these risk factors include hours of sleeping time, hours of television watching, number of hours spent on the computer, hours and number of times students exercise, fast food consumption, sweet drink consumption, sweetened fruit drink consumption, consumption of meal with the family, number of times student's skipped breakfast and consumption of fried foods) .To determine: **(3)** whether students had the daily recommended number of servings of each food group via the utilization of one serving of a food item or items.

Design: Students of the University of the West Indies (St. Augustine) were asked to participate in a study about the prevalence of obesity and its risk factors using convenience sampling. Students were measured using Body Mass Index to assess their weight status and an assessment was made whether they were underweight, normal weight, overweight or obese. The students were also administered a questionnaire which included demographics, a food frequency questionnaire and a 24 hour recall. After these were administered the Excel program and SPSS program was used to put the data into tables and to conduct Chi squared testing, calculate percentages, analyse cross tabulation and conduct binary logistics on the data collected.

Results : The results showed that students of the University of the West Indies St. Augustine were not relatively obese according to Body Mass Index only 8 % of students in the study were classified as obese. Other results showed that obesity risk factors were not affecting students of this university and that students were not eating according to the United States Department of Agriculture recommended daily servings of the five food groups as well as oils, fats and sweets and alcohol.

Conclusion: Students were therefore found to not be eating well and not eating the recommended caloric intake also recommended by the United States Department of Agriculture.