

THE LINK BETWEEN THE CONSUMPTION OF SWEETENED BEVERAGES AND THE
DEVELOPMENT OF OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY AMONG STUDENTS OF THE UWI
ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

Nathalia Rupert

Project Supervisor: Dr. Sa'eed Bawa

2013

Background: Overweight and obesity develops when the amount of calories consumed exceeds the amount expended by an individual on a consistent daily basis. Calories are the body's fuel for energy. Once it is not expended sufficiently, the body stores the excess calories as fat, which causes weight gain over time.

Objective: To investigate the frequency of sweetened beverage consumption and its association with overweight and obesity in the students of The UWI, St. Augustine Campus.

Design: This cross-sectional study consisted of 137 (100 females, 37 males) students ≥ 18 years old, who were enrolled at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine campus at the time of study. Students' sweetened beverage consumption patterns were assessed by the use of self-administered questionnaires, which consisted of a food (beverage) frequency questionnaire and a 24-hour diet recall. Their anthropometric measurements and blood pressure were taken and recorded to determine their Body Mass Index (BMI) and blood pressure (BP). Analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 19.0 (IBM Corporation, Chicago, IL, USA).

Results: Statistically, there were no differences ($p=0.217$) in the consumption of sweetened beverages observed when gender was compared. There was no significant difference in the prevalence of consumption among the age groups ($p=0.225$). There was no significant difference in the BMI between genders ($p=0.847$). A significant association was found for systolic blood pressure and male students ($p \leq 0.001$).

No significant relationship was found between sweetened beverage consumption and the development of overweight and obesity.

Conclusion: No significance was found for sweetened beverage consumption and overweight and obesity. Therefore, sweetened beverage consumption is not associated with the development of overweight and obesity among the students of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine campus. Based on the findings of the study, the null hypothesis is accepted.