

**PREVALENCE OF RISK FACTORS FOR DEVELOPING NUTRITION-RELATED  
CHRONIC DISEASES AMONG POLICE OFFICERS IN THE NORTHERN DIVISION  
OF THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO POLICE SERVICE**

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2011

**Background:** A risk factor can be defined as any attribute, characteristic or exposure of an individual that increases the likelihood of developing a disease or injury (WHO, 2011). Common, preventable risk factors underlie most noncommunicable diseases. Most noncommunicable diseases are the result of four particular behaviours (tobacco use, physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, and the harmful use of alcohol) that lead to four key metabolic/physiological changes (raised blood pressure, overweight/obesity, raised blood glucose and raised cholesterol) (WHO, 2011).

**Objective:** To determine the prevalence of risk factors for nutrition-related chronic diseases among police officers in the Northern Division of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

**Design:** Data were collected from April 14<sup>th</sup> to May 1st 2011 using a 58 item questionnaire. Random sampling was used. The sample consisted of 93 police officers of which 69 were male and 24 were female. The researcher visited five police stations which were randomly selected. The questionnaire consisted of five sections which asked questions on their dietary habits, physical activity, lifestyle habits, demographic data and anthropometric data was also measured. Data were analysed using SPSS for Windows version 12.0.

**Results:** Analysis of the data revealed that a large majority of the study population were overweight (51.6%) and consumed a diet low in fruits and vegetables and high in unhealthy foods such as fast foods and foods with a high percentage of sugar. The physical activity of the police officers was found to be inadequate and there was a vast percentage of the study population who consumed alcoholic beverages (69.9%) frequently.

**Conclusion:** This study found that the police officers in the Northern Division are at risk for developing nutrition-related chronic diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease. As such there is need for intervention.