

## ABSTRACT

This is a study of knowledge, attitudes and practices of students in an Urban Kingston Government Secondary school regarding healthy life styles. The population comprises male and female students between the ages of 11-16 years in grades 7-10.

Epidemiological studies have shown that within recent years, there has been an upsurge in morbidity and mortality rates associated with chronic non-communicable diseases. These are related to unhealthy lifestyles. Research in the related predisposing factors which bring about the occurrences of such condition is indicated.

This study undertaken will therefore, form a base to identify students' knowledge of healthy lifestyles and the degree to which it affects their lifestyle practices. In addition it will provide new information that will serve as comparison of previous studies done by Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute.

The school population consisted of 510 students of which 258 (51%) were males and 252 (49%) were females. A stratified random sample of 70 was selected; 36 males (51%) and 34 females (49%). Data collection was done by scheduled interviews. Anthropometric measurements were done by the writer at the conclusion of the interview.

The results showed that the knowledge on healthy lifestyles of the students was high. Scores on practices were low. The scores on their concept about themselves and their teachers were very high while those towards their parents were low. Anthropometric measurements revealed that 61 (87%) of the students had body mass indices within normal range. While 3 (4%) were under weight. Six students (9%) were unavailable for the test.

The implication for health planners is the need for further studies to investigate why students' lifestyle practices were inconsistent with their knowledge. The findings should be used by health planners to plan and implement programmes to meet the identified needs.