

ABSTRACT

Coronary Heart Disease in Trinidad through Quantitative and Qualitative Methods The Impact of Diet and Exercise

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The purpose of this study was to examine qualitative and quantitative aspects to coronary heart disease (CHD) in Trinidad in relation to the variables of diet, exercise, age and gender. Because of the high incidence of heart disease worldwide, a fundamental concern was to determine the extent to which respondents who were knowledgeable about CHD used appropriate diets and engaged in the appropriate kinds of exercise.

Relatedly, there was a concern about how respondents informed themselves about the risk factors related to CHD, as well as the extent to which their cultural belief systems influenced their behavioural choices.

Accordingly, the qualitative mode of enquiry was utilized to elicit and interpret responses and the quantitative mode, mostly through the vehicle of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), to analyse some of those responses. Data were collected through a self-administered as well as a guided questionnaire. The theoretical framework employed was derived from theories of past studies on CHD which were adapted as thought relevant.

The study confirmed the findings of the literature on CHD that there is an association between CHD and exercise but departed from the literature in not finding a relationship with gender, age and diet. Two important findings were that most respondents were ignorant of the causes of CHD and that cultural factors promoted bad eating and exercise habits. In general, the findings suggest the need for a public campaign aimed at modifying lifestyles in healthier directions.