

## Assessing the Lifestyle Factors, Nutritional and Socioeconomic Status Associated with Peptic Ulcer Disease: A Cross-Sectional Study among Patients at the Tema General Hospital of Ghana

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**Abstract :** Peptic Ulcer Disease (PUD) is amongst the commonest gastrointestinal problems that require emergency treatment in order to preserve life. The prevalence of PUD is increasing within the Ghanaian population, deepening the need to identify factors that are associated with its occurrence. This cross-sectional study assessed the nutritional status, socioeconomic and lifestyle factors associated with PUD among patients attending the Out-Patient Department of the Tema General Hospital of Ghana. A food frequency questionnaire and a three-day, 24-hour recall were used to assess the dietary intakes of study participants. A standardized questionnaire was used to obtain information on the participants' socio-demographic characteristics, lifestyle as well as medical history. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 22. The mean age of study participants was  $32.8 \pm 15.41$  years. Females were significantly higher (61.4%) than males (38.6%) ( $p < 0.001$ ). All participants had received some form of education, with tertiary education being the highest (52.6%). The majority of them managed their condition with medications only (86%), while 10.5% managed it with a combination of medications and diet. The rest were either by dietary counseling only (1.8%), or surgery only (1.8%), or herbal medicines (29.3%), which were made from home (7.2%) or bought from a medical store (10.8%). Most of the participants experienced a recurrence of the disease (42.1%). For those who had ever experienced recurrences of the disease, it happened when they ate acidic foods (1.8%), ate bigger portions (1.8%), starved themselves (1.8%), or were stressed (1.8%). Others also had triggers when they took certain medications (1.8%) or ate too much pepper (1.8%). About 49% of the participants were either overweight or obese with a recurrence of PUD ( $p > 0.05$ ). Obese patients had the highest rate of PUD recurrences (41%). Drinking alcohol was significantly associated with the recurrence of PUD ( $\chi^2 = 5.243$ ,  $p = 0.026$ ). Other lifestyles, such as weed smoking, fasting, and use of herbal medicine and NSAIDs did not have any significant association with the disease recurrence. There was no significant correlation between the various dietary patterns and anthropometric parameters except dietary pattern one (salty snacks, regular soft drinks, milk, sweetened yogurt, ice cream, and cooked vegetables), which had a positive correlation with weight ( $p = 0.002$ ) and BMI ( $p = 0.038$ ). PUD patients should target weight reduction actions and reduce alcohol intake as measures to control the recurrence of the disease. Nutrition Education among this population must be promoted to minimize the recurrence of PUD.

**Keywords :** Dietary patterns, lifestyle factors, nutritional status, peptic ulcer disease

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