

Nutritional Wellness at the Workplace

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Abstract : Background: The rate of absenteeism and prevalence of NCDs in South Africa is extremely high. This is consistent with other educational institutions and workplaces around the globe. In most cases the absence of health and the presence of one or more non communicable diseases coupled with the lack of physical exercise is a major factor in absenteeism. Absenteeism at the workplace comes at a huge cost to the employer and the country as a whole. Aim: Findings from this study was to develop a suitable nutritional wellness program for the workplace. Methodology: A needs analysis in the form of 24-hour recall, food frequency, health and socio demographic questionnaires was undertaken to determine the need for a wellness program for the institution. Anthropometric indices such as BMI, waist circumference and blood pressure were also undertaken to determine the state of health of the staff. Results: This study has found that obesity, central obesity, hypertension as well as deficiencies in nutrients and minerals were prevalent in this group. Fruit and vegetable consumption was also below the WHO recommendation. This study showed a link between diet, physical activity and diseases of lifestyle. There were positive correlations between age and systolic blood pressure, waist circumference and systolic blood pressure, waist circumference and diastolic blood pressure and waist-to-height ratio and BMI. Conclusion: The results indicated the need for immediate intervention in the form of a wellness program. Nutrition education is important for both the workplace and out. Education and knowledge are important factors for lifestyle changes. The proposed intervention is aimed at improving presenteeism and decreasing the incidence of non- communicable diseases. Presenteeism and good health are important factors for quality education at all educational institutions.

Keywords : absenteeism, non-communicable diseases, nutrition, wellness

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