

Body Mass Index and Dietary Habits among Nursing College Students Living in the University Residence in Kirkuk City, Iraq

Authors : Jenan Shakoor

Abstract : Obesity prevalence is increasing worldwide. University life is a challenging period especially for students who have to leave their familiar surroundings and settle in a new environment. The current study aimed to assess the diet and exercise habits and their association with body mass index (BMI) among nursing college students living at Kirkuk University residence. This was a descriptive study. A non-probability (purposive) sample of 101 students living in Kirkuk University residence was recruited during the period from the 15th November 2015 to the 5th May 2016. A questionnaire was constructed for the purpose of the study which consisted of four parts: the demographic characteristics of the study sample, eating habits, eating at college and healthy habits. The data were collected by interviewing the study sample and the weight and height were measured by a trained researcher at the college. Descriptive statistical analysis was undertaken. Data were prepared, organized and entered into the computer file; the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 20) was used for data analysis. A p value ≤ 0.05 was accepted as statistical significant. A total of 63 (62.4%) of the sample were aged 20-21 with a mean age of 22.1 (SD ± 0.653). A third of the sample 38 (37.6%) were from level four at college, 67 (66.3%) were female and 46 (45.5%) of participants were from a middle socio-economic status. 14 (13.9%) of the study sample were overweight (BMI = 25-29.9 kg/m²) and 6 (5.9%) were obese (BMI ≥ 30 kg/m²) compared to 73 (72.3%) were of normal weight (BMI = 18.5-24.9 kg/m²). With regard to eating habits and exercise, 42 (41.6%) of the students rarely ate breakfast, 79 (78.2%) eat lunch at university residence, 77 (78.2%) of the students reported rarely doing exercise and 62 (61.4%) of them were sleeping for less than eight hours. No significant association was found between the variables age, sex, level of college and socio-economic status and BMI, while there was a significant association between eating lunch at university and BMI ($p = 0.03$). No significant association was found between eating habits, healthy habits and BMI. The prevalence of overweight and obesity among the study sample was 19.8% with female students being more obese than males. Further studies are needed to identify BMI among residence students in other colleges and increasing the awareness of undergraduate students to healthy food habits.

Keywords : body mass index, diet, obesity, university residence

Conference Title : ICO 2017 : International Conference on Obesity

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : May 25-26, 2017