

## Non-Communicable Diseases: Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Risk Factors among Secondary School Students in Sharjah, UAE

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**Abstract :** Background: Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) have become an alarming health problem across the globe. The risk of developing those diseases begins in childhood and develops gradually under the influence of risk factors including obesity, hypertension, dyslipidemia, cigarette smoking and decreased physical activity. Therefore, this study aims to determine the level of knowledge, attitudes, and practices of the risk factors of lifestyle induced chronic diseases (non-communicable diseases) among secondary school students in Sharjah city. Methods: Five hundred and ninety-one school children, from grades 10 to 12, formed the study sample, using the multistage stratified cluster sampling method. Four governmental schools were chosen, for each gender. Data was collected through a pretested, close-ended questionnaire consisting of five sections; demographics, physical activity, diet, smoking and sleeping patterns. Frequencies and descriptive statistics were used to analyze data through SPSS 23. Results: The data showed 64.6% of students had low knowledge of risk factors of non-communicable diseases. Concerning physical activity, 58.2 % were physically inactive and females being less active than males. More than 2/3 of students didn't fulfill the recommended daily intake of fruits and vegetables (75.9%). 8% reported to be smokers with cigarettes being the most encountered tobacco product. Conclusion: Our study has demonstrated a low level of knowledge and practices yet, positive attitudes towards risk factors of chronic diseases. We recommend implementation of thorough awareness campaigns through public health education about the risk factors of non-communicable diseases.

**Keywords :** non-communicable diseases, physical activity, diet, knowledge, attitudes, practices, smoking

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