

Driving towards Better Health: A Cross-Sectional Study of the Prevalence and Correlates of Obesity among Commercial Drivers in East London, South Africa

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Abstract : Background: The unhealthy food choices and sedentary lifestyle of commercial drivers predisposes them to obesity and obesity related diseases. Yet, no attention has been paid to obesity burden among this high risk group in South Africa. This study examines the prevalence of obesity and its risk factors among commercial drivers in East London, South Africa. Methods: This cross-sectional study utilized the WHO STEP wise approach to screen for obesity among 403 drivers in Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (BCMM), South Africa. Anthropometric, blood pressure and blood glucose measurements were taken following a standard procedure. Overweight and obesity was defined as a body mass index (BMI) of 25.0 kgm^{-2} - 29.9 kg/m^2 and $\geq 30 \text{ kg/ m}^2$, respectively. Bivariate and multivariate analysis were used to determine the prevalence and determinants of obesity. Result: The mean age of the participants was 43.3 (SD \pm 12.5) years, mean height (cm) and weight (kg) were 170.1(\pm 6.2cm) and 83(SD \pm 18.7), respectively. The prevalence of overweight and obesity was 34.0% and 38.0%, respectively. After adjusting for confounding factors, only age (OR 1.6, CI 1.0-2.7), hypertension (OR 3.6, CI 2.3-5.7) and non-smoking (OR 2.0, CI 1.3-3.1) were independent predictors of obesity. Conclusion: The prevalence of overweight and obesity is high among commercial drivers. Age, hypertension, and non-smoking were independent predictors of obesity among the sample. Measures aimed at promoting health and reducing obesity should be prioritized among this group.

Keywords : obesity and overweight, commercial taxi drivers, risk factors, South Africa

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