

Overweight and obesity among tomorrow's health professionals: A ground reality from a developing country

Sajid Mahmood, Jenny Freeman and Clare Relton
School of Health and Related Research, University of Sheffield, UK

Objectives: To estimate the prevalence of overweight and obesity and to identify high risk groups in tomorrow's health professional.

Methodology: A cross-sectional analytical study was conducted [March to December 2012] in six different institutes in Karachi, Pakistan. Data were collected from undergraduate students of medicine, dentistry, physiotherapy, pharmacy and nursing through self-administered questionnaires, followed by anthropometric measurements. Actual weight categories were defined by using South Asian cut-off points for body mass index (BMI). Overweight and obesity was defined as BMI ≥ 23.0 (South Asian BMI cut-off points). Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Sheffield, UK and Dow University of Health Sciences, Karachi, Pakistan. Logistic regression was used to determine the factors associated with overweight and obesity.

Results: Of 2114 participating students, 12.6% were overweight and 17% obese. Participants who underestimated body weight were more likely to be overweight or obese [OR=13.18 (95% C.I: 8.22 to 21.11)] than participants with correct estimation of weight. Similarly, overweight and obesity was more likely among participants with incorrect information of personal BMI [OR=1.91 (95% C.I: 1.21 to 3.01)]. In particular, overweight and obesity was more likely among participants who experienced weight stigmatization [OR=2.36 (95% C.I: 1.44 to 3.84)].

Conclusion: Overweight and obesity was highly prevalent among undergraduate students of medicine and allied health sciences in Karachi with nearly one third of respondents had weight above normal limit. The factors which contribute toward overweight and obesity include underestimation of weight, lack of personal BMI knowledge and weight stigmatization.

Biography

Sajid Mahmood earned his MBBS degree in 2005 followed by MSc. Epidemiology & Biostatistics degree in 2009. Recently he completed his Master of Public Health programme from United Kingdom. At the moment he is doing his PhD (public health) from University of Sheffield, UK. His area of interest is childhood obesity and its prevention. He has published couple of papers in reputed journals even during his student life. He is a member of International Epidemiological Association (IEA) and reviewer of Journal of Pakistan Medical Students (JPMS).

sajid.mahmood@sheffield.ac.uk