Metabolic syndrome among university employees and their families in Saudi Arabia

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**Background:** Metabolic syndrome (MetS) is a clinical term used for the co-occurrence of several cardiovascular risk factors. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC; Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and United Arab Emirates), have been exposed to rapid socioeconomic growth and lifestyle changes in the last 4 decades. That has resulted in changes in the dietary habit and insufficient physical activity leading to high prevalence of cardiovascular risk factors (diabetes, hypertension, obesity and hyperlipidemia). In GCC countries MetS ranges from 20.7-40% which is 10-15% higher than many developing countries, and highest among women.

**Method:** A cross sectional survey using WHO Stepwise tools to collect data form 4500 university employees and their families over 18 years old during May 2013 to April 2014.

**Results:** Overall prevalence of MetS using the International Diabetes Federation criteria was 25.3%, male had higher prevalence than female (30.6% vs. 21.1% \(p<0.001\)) and non-Saudi employees had a significantly higher prevalence than Saudis (31.3 vs. 22.5 \(p<0.001\)). MetS had a strong association with the age, and an inverse relation with the education level.

**Conclusion and recommendation:** Such alarming MetS prevalence among the employees requires a serious solution by the senior University Administration and the preventive strategies are recommended at institutional level: a) Adding an additional dietitian to the employees’ clinic targeting cardiovascular risk factors reduction through healthy diet. b) Reducing the salt intake via the University food services. c) Encouraging employees to get a membership in the recreation centers.

**Biography**
Alzeidan R A is a PhD student in Birmingham City University (BCU)-UK, has a master degree in healthcare management and BSc in pharmacy. She is working as clinical researcher in King Saud University- College of Medicine-Department of Cardiology. She has published several peer-reviewed papers and she presented her research projects in regional, national and international conferences.

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