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Are obesity and overweight becoming public health problems in Iran?

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Obesity is an undesirable outcome of changing of lifestyle and behaviours. It is also reversible predisposing factor for the development of several debilitating diseases. Recent descriptive studies suggest that Iran has geared in the nutrition and epidemiological transition processes. Therefore, while the problems of undernutrition (e.g. growth retardation and micronutrient deficiencies) still exist, the burden of overweight/obesity and diet-related chronic diseases is increasing. This study was aimed to survey the obesity and overweight as a public health problems in Iran. We conducted a research-based articles study with a sample of 108 articles, which were published in subject of the prevalence rate and the community status of nutrition, overweight and obesity among Iranian people. By using the PubMed and SID databases, the keywords of overweight, obesity and nutrition in combination with Iran were searched. We have found 108 articles in relation to those keywords in Persian and English languages. Then, by using the content analysis method, the sample of selected articles was analyzed. Findings show the overall prevalence rates of obesity and overweight among people who live in the North of Iran, were 18.8% and 34.8% respectively. Also, in ethnic group comparison, it is found that over one out of five adults in northern Iran suffer from obesity and an alarming rate was shown among the women. Among the three ethnic groups of Iran (Fars-Native, Turkman, and Sisstanish Ethnic Groups), the highest and the lowest rates were seen in Fars-native and Sisstanish ethnic groups, respectively. The overall prevalence rate of central obesity was 28.3%. In another survey among 89,532 subjects aged over 15 years living in the 28 provinces of Iran, it is showed that the national estimates of overweight, obesity and morbid obesity were 28.6%, 10.8% and 3.4%, respectively. We concluded that the obesity or being overweight is a major health problem in Iran. The findings of the present study provide alarming evidence for health professionals and policy makers about the high prevalence of overweight and obesity in the population of Iran.

Biography

Abolfazl Jariani is the Head of Iranian Nursing Association. He has completed his MSc in Nursing and his PhD degree in Health Service Management in Tehran University of Medical Sciences.

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