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Unhealthy weight control practice among female high school adolescents in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Unhealthy weight control practices are a serious concern with clinical implication as a potential risk factor for eating disorder. Despite recent epidemiological studies indicate a high prevalence of unhealthy weight control practices in developing countries, there is lack of such knowledge in Ethiopia. This is the first Ethiopian study aimed to determine the magnitude of unhealthy weight control practice among female high school adolescents in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. We conducted a school based cross-sectional study among randomly selected 721 adolescents. We used a nine-item question to measure engagement in unhealthy weight control practice and an eight-item body part satisfaction scale to measure body part dissatisfaction. The body part satisfaction scale was translated into the local Amharic language and tested for face validity. Logistic regression was used to calculate odds ratios for predictors of unhealthy weight control practice. The magnitude of engagement in unhealthy weight control practice at least once a week in the last one month was 232 (33.8%). The overall prevalence of purging and non-purging behavior was 10(1.5%) and 222(32.3%), respectively. Factors that were significantly associated were perceived overweight [AOR=2.88, 95% CI=1.08-7.69], being overweight [AOR=2.84; 95% CI=1.31-6.17], severe depression [AOR=1.98; 95% CI=1.17-3.35], family influence to lose weight [AOR=1.59; 95% CI=1.03-2.45] and being wealthy [AOR=2.09; 95% CI=1.24-3.52]. This study revealed a high prevalence rate of unhealthy weight control practices including both purging and non-purging behaviors among female adolescents in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Such findings imply that public health systems should pay attention to these behaviors and design prevention and intervention strategies.

Biography:

Tigest Ajeme Tuffa has completed her Master's degree in Public Health with a specialty in Nutrition from Addis Ababa University, College of Health Sciences, School of Public Health. Her interest towards nutrition mainly on eating disorder has made her to work on a study on female high school adolescents regarding unhealthy weight loss practice, one of a critical public health issue these days. She has more than five years work experience in the health care, both in direct health care service and leadership.

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