

Prevalence and Predisposing Factors of Obesity Among Adults in Makurdi

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Obesity is a serious global public health issue associated with high morbidity and mortality. It contributes to chronic conditions such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and hypertension. In Nigeria, urbanization, changes in dietary patterns, and sedentary lifestyles have significantly increased obesity prevalence, particularly among adults. Despite its growing burden, little is known about the knowledge level, prevalence, and predisposing factors to obesity among adults in Makurdi, Benue State. As such, this study is aimed at assessing the knowledge, prevalence, and predisposing factors of obesity among adults in Makurdi.

Method: The study was conducted in Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria, using a descriptive cross-sectional design. The study population consisted of adults who are within the age of 18-90 years. A total of 385 adult residents were selected using a multistage sampling technique. Data were collected through a structured, interviewer-administered questionnaire and anthropometric measurements including height and weight. The Body Mass Index (BMI) was calculated to determine obesity status. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means, while inferential statistics (Chi-square test) were used to examine associations between socio-demographic variables and prevalence of obesity at a significance level of $p < 0.05$, using SPSS version 23.

Result: Findings from the study revealed that the majority of respondents had normal weight (72.7%), while 13.8% were obese, 7.8% overweight, and 5.7% underweight. Awareness of obesity was moderate, with 55.6% of participants aware of obesity and its associated risks, and 50.1% acknowledging its link to serious health conditions. Knowledge assessment revealed that 49.9% of respondents had good knowledge of obesity, 46.8% had moderate knowledge, and 3.4% demonstrated poor knowledge. The main predisposing factors identified included excessive television viewing (60.0%), overeating (61.0%), eating in front of television (79.7%), high consumption of carbonated drinks (63.9%), consumption of chocolate (72.5), inadequate sleep or stress (62.1%), sedentary lifestyle (55.1%), having less than 8hrs sleep (70.4%), and excessive computer/phone usage (56.6%). Socio-demographic factors such as age, marital status, educational level, ethnicity, religion, and family type showed significant associations with obesity prevalence ($p < 0.05$), while sex, occupation, and income were not statistically significant ($P > 0.05$).

Conclusion: The study concludes that although awareness and knowledge of obesity among adults in Makurdi are relatively high, the prevalence of obesity remains considerable, reflecting poor lifestyle practices and low engagement in preventive behaviors. The most influential determinants of obesity in Makurdi include age, marital status, education, and lifestyle factors such as poor dietary habits and physical inactivity. It is therefore recommended that continuous community-based health education, nutrition counselling, and routine screening for obesity be strengthened to improve awareness and mitigate the rising trend of obesity among adults in Benue State.

Keywords: Obesity, Prevalence, Knowledge, Predisposing Factors, Adults

