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Research Article

LIFESTYLE HABITS AMONG PHARMACY STUDENTS: A PILOT STUDY IN ALKHARJ, KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

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Abstract:

In recent decades, there is an increasing research interest in lifestyle worldwide and it is an important health status determinant. High percentage of university students show unhealthy lifestyles.

This study aim to explore lifestyle behaviors and obesity among pharmacy students in Alkharj city.

Methodology: A structured questionnaire was designed, validated, and used to collect information regarding the lifestyle habits among pharmacy students. It was hand-delivered to 211 students. We analyzed the data using SPSS software.

Results: The survey elucidates that eating habits represent a major concern. Fortunately, smoking doesn't form a major problem between pharmacy students in prince sattam bin abdulaziz university

Conclusion: There are a major unhealthy habits and bad lifestyle behaviors such as drinking soft drinks, using the internet for long durations, eating few fruits and vegetables and having stress. Nevertheless, there are many healthy habits like sport and also the majority are non-smokers.

Key words: *Lifestyle; Obesity; Pharmacy; Students; Universities.*

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INTRODUCTION:

There are many normal and traditional daily activities which are accepted by people during their lives and can affect their health, these activities are called lifestyle.[1,2] .The healthy lifestyle contains many activities such as exercising , having a proper diet, living non-sedentary life , having normal body weight, not drinking alcohol or smoking and improving the immunization of the body against diseases. Each individual tries to maintain and promote his/her health and tries to avoid diseases by selecting healthy lifestyle.[3]

In recent decades, there is increasing research interest in lifestyle worldwide and it is considered an important health status determinant. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health-related quality of life of 60% of an individual depends on their lifestyle [4]. Many publications [5–7] have shown that we can reduce disease occurrence and mortality rates by practicing healthy lifestyle . The healthy lifestyle is correlated with socio-demographic dimensions such as sex, marital status, age, paid employment and economical level [8].

Most health problems, which are observed in most countries, especially in developing ones, such as cardiovascular diseases, obesity, addiction and cancers, are connected with the transformations in the individuals' lifestyle. [9]

The early adoption of healthy living habits will clearly affect the healthy lifestyles; if the youths adopted unhealthy lifestyles these practices in adulthood will strongly linked to unhealthy habits [10, 11].

University life bridges adolescence and adulthood. When students start this period they start a new dynamic period of development and growth. In this period individuals start rapidly changing in the mind and body, and in their relationships [12]. There are many hard life conditions and various lifestyles in the environment of the university at this stage. This stage also contains changes in study style and uncommon life conditions, as a result, many students engage in inadequate nutritional intake, rest, exercise and other unhealthy habits [13–17].

Among university students, high percentage exhibit unhealthy lifestyles, and to some extent these lifestyles can be portended by social features (18)

After adopting the unhealthy habits in youth period, it is difficult to change these habits in adulthood, nevertheless we can avoid many effects of health risk factors among adults if we identify and change these

behaviors at an early stage [19]. Therefore, it is important to decrease unhealthy and increase healthy lifestyle behaviors among young people.

Several studies exploring lifestyle habits of university students were previously conducted in Saudi Arabia (20-22),

However, to our knowledge, there is no published work exploring life styles among university students in Alkharj city.

This study aims to show the healthy and unhealthy lifestyle behaviors among pharmacy student in Alkharj city and to explore the prevalence of obesity in these students

METHODOLOGY:

This cross-sectional study was carried out in Alkharj city. The questionnaire was adopted from previously published study with some modification [23]. It was then given to five academic staff for validation. The students of pharmacy college (boys & girls) were included as a participants.

The questionnaire was composed of 10 questions and contains Four main parts. The first one contains data about Age . The second part contains data about gender. The Third part of the questionnaire provided information relating to body mass index (BMI) and the prevalence of obesity among the students. The fourth part of the questionnaire contains the key question in the survey.

The questionnaire was randomly handed-delivered to 211 students. Completion of the questionnaire was voluntary and confidential.

After the collection of data from study participants, we started the entry and analysis of the data by using version 20 software of Statistical package for Social Sciences SPSS. In Some questions the student can select more than one answer so the summed frequency may be more than 100 % for these questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The majority of study participants are in the age group between 20-21 (51.18%) followed by the age group between 22-23 (26.54%) . Table 1 shows the age distribution of the participants.

The second part contains information about gender . About 53 % of the participants are female. Table 2 shows the gender of the participants

The third part contains information about students height and weight. We calculated the body mass

index (BMI) of study participants by dividing weight in kilograms over squared height in meters. Study participants were categorized as underweight, normal, overweight, or obese according to their calculated BMI. Unfortunately, The problem of increasing students' weight represents a major concern. More than 39 % of the students are overweight or obese. Table 3 shows the BMI and corresponding categories of study participants.

Eating habits represent a major concern. Only 34.36 % of the participants reported eating vegetables and fruits daily. Fortunately, smoking doesn't form a major problem between pharmacy students in prince sattam bin abdulaziz university, 92.89 % of the students didn't smoke. Only 15 students (7.11%) smoke daily.

About 68.24 % of the students stated that they drink soft drinks (where 24.64 % of the participants drink soft drinks continuously and 43.60 % of the participants sometimes drink soft drinks), these results also indicate bad eating habits. Stress and anxiety also shown to be of major concern with the lifestyle of the students, where 52.61 % of study participants reported that they suffer from stress or anxiety. Table 4 shows the key questions in the survey about lifestyle

In addition to these bad lifestyles, using internet seems to form a problem and lead to time wasting. About 63.51 % of the participants using the internet daily for more than 4 hours.

According to exercise, only 65 participants (30.81%) exercise daily and about 88 participants (41.71%) exercise once weekly. Health care providers should encourage the public to exercise regularly and to discourage the sedentary life style.

CONCLUSION:

This study found that there were a major unhealthy habits and bad lifestyle attitudes such as drinking soft drinks, using the internet for more the 4 hours, eating few fruits and vegetable meals and having stress and anxiety. But still a further study in a large population is recommended.

Although this study showed unhealthy habits and bad lifestyle attitudes, there are many healthy habits like sport and the majority are non-smokers.

We suggest introducing an educational program for university students to improve health attitude and to encourage healthier habits.

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Table 1. Participants age		
Age of the participant	# of Participants	Percent of Participants
18-19	38	18.00%
20-21	108	51.18%
22-23	56	26.54%
24-25	7	3.32%
26-27	2	0.95%

Table 2. Participants Gender		
Gender of the participant	# of Participants	Percent of Participants
Male	99	46.92%
Female	112	53.08%

Table 3. Participants Body mass index			
BMI	BMI Categories	# of Participants	Percent of Participants
<18.5	Underweight	28	13.27%
18.5–24.9	Normal weight	100	47.39%
25–29.9	Overweight	43	20.38%
BMI of 30 or greater	Obesity	40	18.96%

Table 4. The key questions in the survey	
Variables	N (%)
Do you Consider yourself Healthy?	
Yes	134(63.51 %)
No	37(17.53 %)
Don't know	40(18.96 %)
Do you eat Fruits and Vegetables Daily	
Yes	73(34.60%)
No	138(65.40 %)
Exercise:	
Daily	65(30.81%)
Once weekly	88(41.71%)
Once monthly	37(17.53%)
Never	21(9.95%)
Do you Have any diseases or disabilities	
Yes	17(08.06%)
No	180(85.31%)
Don't know	14(06.63%)
Smoking	
Yes	15(07.11%)
No	196(92.89%)
Do you visit a physician	
Yes, always	14(06.64%)
Yes. Sometimes	72(34.12%)
Yes, rarely	78(36.97%)
Never	47(22.27%)
Do you suffer from stress or anxiety	
Yes	111(52.61%)
No	100(47.39%)
Do you drink soft drinks	
Yes, always	52(24.64%)
Yes, sometimes	92(43.60%)
Yes, rarely	34(16.11%)
Never	33(15.64%)
Do you Consider your food healthy or not	
Yes	90(42.65 %)
No	121(57.35%)
How many hours you spend using the internet by mobile or by computers daily	
Less than 1 hour	10(04.74 %)
1-4 hours	67(31.75 %)
4-8 hours	59(27.96 %)
More than 8 hours	75(35.55 %)