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Prevalence of Obesity in Relation to Education and Socioeconomic Level in Students and working women

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ABSTRACT

Prevalence of obesity has become more common and major problem that has been increasing worldwide particularly among women. There are many factors leading to obesity categorized into internal factors and external factors. External factors include socioeconomic level, education, income, occupation, physical activity, different dietary patterns and food quality while internal factors include genetic, psychological and physiological conditions, different eating and other disorders. This research was designed to study the incidence of obesity in students and working women. 60 samples of females were taken from each of 3 categories including teachers, students and employees. First group of 20 samples of females were taken from teachers, second group of 20 samples from students and third group of 20 samples from employees (manual employees, non-manual employees and self-employees). Data of 60 samples from each group was collected by using anthropometric measurements, BeurerGmBH Black 64 (type) machine and obesity related questionnaire. Then the data was subjected to the frequency distribution of chi-square. Obesity was directly associated and increases with different levels of socioeconomic status (9.797), income (61.191), diet (48.704), diseases (21.273), age (60.00), weight (82.48 ± 1.30), BMI (33.28 ± 0.43), body fat (40.51 ± 0.42), genetic problem (6.088) while inversely related to education (34.036), physical activity level (13.733), body muscles (28.84 ± 0.56) but not linked with height (5.14 ± 0.05) and waist-hip ratio (0.82 ± 0.01) (body shape and body frame). From present study it is concluded that obesity in female students and industrial employees is strongly associated with bad eating

habits, sedentary lifestyle and physical inactivity, stress of work load because of differences in socioeconomic level and to some extent with diseases and genetic problem. In teachers incidence of obesity is less because of higher education level and knowledge. It is seen that occurrence of obesity in teachers is mostly associated with diseases and to some extent genetic problems.

INTRODUCTION

Increasing prevalence of obesity has become global health issue (WHO, 2003). In 2006 the prevalence of obesity in females in rural areas of Asia was 20.4% and in urban areas of Asia was 50% (Snehalatha *et al.*, 2002; Baskar *et al.*, 2004; Ramachandran *et al.*, 2008). Obesity is a medical condition which leads to the accumulation of excess body fat in the body (Haslam and James, 2005). Obesity is a complicated multifaceted chronic disorder which develops from interaction of genotype and environment. Factors leading to the development of obesity are combination of social, behavioral, educational, cultural, physiological, psychological, metabolic and inherited (NIH, 2004). Increasing predominance of obesity reflects the powerful impact of standard of living involving factors diet, on its etiology (Azadbakht and Esmailzadeh, 2007).

Socioeconomic level is a fundamental determinant which is strongly associated with wider surroundings, community, economic, employment and learning policies. The association among socioeconomic level and obesity is complex and different patterns of obesity are more inflated in women compared to men and children. Difference in socioeconomic status is a leading cause of increased prevalence of obesity (Molarius *et al.*, 2000; Ball and Crawford, 2005).

In comparison to obese persons with high socioeconomic rank, the overweight persons with low socioeconomic rank possibly less recognize their weight trouble, and these deprived people cannot pay for healthy foods like fruits and vegetables that may assist them to preserve their normal body weight. Even in poor districts there are more scarcity of parks, fast-food outlets and restaurants and other leisure conveniences. Those environments that

encourage the expenditure of energy rich foods and discourage bodily activity contribution are called Obeseogenic environment (Wardle and Griffith, 2001; Drewnowski, 2004; Frank, 2004).

Many studies have explained the important factors of socioeconomic level such as education; income and occupation tend to affect the health and obesity in women. Education symbolizes the person's knowledge and tells about occupation and income strongly. Income refers to the material situation that may be foundation for health-promoting environment and fitness. Occupation is related to the social levels and different constitutional rights (Galobardes and Lynch, 2007).

Sedentary life style and more consumption of alcohol and stress-related illness are linked with the increasing incidence of non-communicable unceasing illnesses. It is important to note that obesity is a major risk factor that is linked with death from non-communicable unceasing illnesses, and increasing rapidly. (Uauyet *et al.*, 2001). Bad diet and sedentary life style increase the occurrence of obesity in adults and children in relatively short time period (Kopelman, 2000; Ogden *et al.*, 2000).

Physical idleness is a well-known hazard issue for the expansion and upholding of obesity. Latterly, considerable deliberation has been given to the role of inactive behavior (TV watching, using skype and indoor activities) in obesity and it is observed that inactive behaviors are linked with obesity separately of bodily activity. However, the present suggestions about physical activity do not warn about inactive behaviors (Salmon *et al.*, 2000; Jakes *et al.*, 2003; Mummery *et al.*, 2005). Overweight and obesity are positively linked with growing age, low levels of leisure time physical activity and different eating behavior. Overweight and obesity are also linked with subordinate levels of education and low socioeconomic level (Lindstro *et al.*, 2003; Geliebter and Aversa, 2003; Stergren *et al.*, 2001).

Objectives:-

- To evaluate the prevalence of obesity in relation to education and socioeconomic level in students and working women.

- To determine different eating habits/pattern for assessing the prevalence of obesity.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present research was conducted on obese students and working women. 60 samples of women were categorized into three groups. Each group was included 20 samples. Group 1 included 20 samples of female students living on 5000-10,000/=. Group 2 included 20 samples of female teachers having salary ranging from 25,000-40,000, 41,000-60,000, 61,000-80,000, 81,000-100,000 and above 100,000/=. Group 3 included 20 samples of female industrial employees (manual, non-manual and self) having salary ranging from 5,000-10,000, 11,000-15,000 and above 15,000/=. The research was carried out at Nutrition Laboratory of National Hospital, Faisalabad, and Institute of Rural Home Economics in the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad. Data for each of 60 samples of women was collected from obesity related questionnaire and anthropometric measurements was taken following the methodology described by (Visscheret *al.* 2000). Age was recorded in years by asking them. Body weight and height was measured barefooted and lightly dressed by using electronic weighing balance and stadiometer (Chumlea et al., 1990). BMI was calculated by using the given formula (Visscheret *al.* 2000).

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{Weight (kg)}}{\text{Height (m}^2\text{)}}$$

Waist and hip measurements for waist: hip ratio was measured by using flexible inches tape (Seidell and Molarius, 1998). Body fat/ muscle/ mass was measured by using bioelectric scale (Beurer GmbH BLACK Blr.64). For the interpretation of results data collected were

subjected to statistical analysis using frequency distribution of Chi-square and analysis of variencetechniques. Means of treatment were compared by Duncan’s new multiple range test (Steel *et al.*, 1996).

RESULTS

Table 4.1: Frequency distribution of socioeconomics level in obese students and working women

Socioeconomic Status	Student	Teacher	Employ	Total
Low	9	5	14	28
	45.0%	25.0%	70.0%	46.7%
Medium	1	4	2	7
	5.0%	20.0%	10.0%	11.7%
High	10	11	4	25
	50.0%	55.0%	20.0%	41.7%
Total	20	20	20	60
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Chi-Square = 9.797 df = 4 P<0.044*				
*Significant at P<0.05				

Education	Student	Teacher	Employ	Total
Matric	0	0	2	2
	.0%	.0%	10.0%	3.3%
F.A/F.Sc	0	0	4	4
	.0%	.0%	20.0%	6.7%
BA/B.Com/B.Sc	9	0	6	15
	45.0%	.0%	30.0%	25.0%
M.A/M.Sc./M.Phil	11	14	8	33
	55.0%	70.0%	40.0%	55.0%
Ph.D/Other	0	6	0	6
	.0%	30.0%	.0%	10.0%
Total	20	20	20	60
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Chi-Square = 34.036 df = 8 P<0.000** Highly Significant				
Income	Student	Teacher	Employ	Total
1000-10000	10	6	8	24
	50.0%	30.0%	40.0%	40.0%
10001-20000	8	0	4	12
	40.0%	.0%	20.0%	20.0%

above 30000	2	14	6	22
	10.0%	70.0%	30.0%	36.7%
Total	0	0	2	2
	.0%	.0%	10.0%	3.3%
Chi-Square = 61.191 df = 4 P<0.000**				
Highly Significant				
Expenditure on food	Student	Teacher	Employ	Total
1000-10000	15	0	12	27
	75.0%	.0%	60.0%	45.0%
10001-20000	5	8	8	21
	25.0%	40.0%	40.0%	35.0%
20001-30000	0	6	0	6
	.0%	30.0%	.0%	10.0%
above 30000	0	6	0	6
	.0%	30.0%	.0%	10.0%
Total	20	20	20	60
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Chi-Square = 38.857 df = 6 P<0.000**				
Highly Significant				
Effect of work control in term of occupation	Student	Teacher	Employ	Total

Poor	10	6	8	24
	50.0%	30.0%	40.0%	40.0%
Medium	8	0	4	12
	40.0%	.0%	20.0%	20.0%
High	2	14	6	22
	10.0%	70.0%	30.0%	36.7%
Complete	0	0	2	2
	.0%	.0%	10.0%	3.3%
Total	20	20	20	60
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Chi-Square = 23.182 df = 6 P<0.001** Highly Significant				
Activity level	Student	Teacher	Employ	Total
Sedentary	4	2	12	18
	20.0%	10.0%	60.0%	30.0%
Moderate	12	12	6	30
	60.0%	60.0%	30.0%	50.0%
High	4	6	2	12
	20.0%	30.0%	10.0%	20.0%
Total	20	20	20	60
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square = 13.733 df = 4 P<0.008**

Highly Significant

DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted to study the prevalence of obesity that has become more common major issue in the world. There are many factors leading to obesity including socioeconomic level, education, income, occupation, physical activity(Azadbakht and Esmailzadeh, 2007).

Socioeconomic level is a main parameter which includes other important factors such as education, occupation and income and classified into low, medium, high. The results of present study showed that obesity was more prevalent in women with low and high class and there was strong association (Chi-Square = 9.797) between socioeconomic status and obesity in women as move from medium to high and medium to low class as supported by (Sobal and Stunkard, 1989).

Education indicates the individual's knowledge has strong effect on person's health. The present study showed that there was inverse but strong association (Chi-Square = 34.036) among obesity and education. As education level increases the rate of obesity decreases. So, women with higher education were obese less as compared to those women with lower education as observed by (Molarius *et al.*, 2000).

The relationship between obesity, income and expenditures on food was highly significant (Chi-Square = 61.191). Income ramps varies person to person and within societies and has main effect on person's health. Women with high or low income level and higher expenditures on food were at higher risk of obesity because of bad consumption behaviors and food insecurity as resembled by (Gortmaker *et al.*, 1993).

Occupation is linked to social levels and different constitutional rights. There are varieties of occupations. Some occupations keep the person physically more active but in some occupations sitting time and work stress is more. Effect of work control in occupation is an important factor and was inversely associated with BMI and WHR (Chi-Square = 23.182) in obese persons as observed by (Overgaard *et al.*, 2004).

Activity level including physical activity, leisure-time physical activity and time spend in leisure-time physical activity is an important parameter to determine the risk of obesity. Physical activity has important role either in prevention or prevalence of obesity. Sedentary behavior or low physical activity and consumption of energy rich food leads to obesity (Haskell, 1996). Leisure-time physical activity includes television watching, massaging, using skyp, book reading, indoor and outdoor games and outing. The results of present study showed that those women who spend more time in leisure-time physical activity while sitting and snacking were at higher risk of obesity than those who spend time in recreational activities. Therefore, the association of obesity with activity level, physical activity, leisure-time physical activity and time spend in leisure-time physical activity was highly significant (Chi-Square = 13.733) as supported by (Leermakers *et al.*, 2000).

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