
Nutritional status and factors associated with weight distribution among adults in Batticaloa district

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Poor nutritional status is a chronic condition and the prevalence of adult obesity is increasing rapidly worldwide due to environmental and behavioral changes such as urbanization and modernization. Data on nutritional status among adults in developing countries including the different regions are needed for primary prevention. This study was undertaken to assess the nutritional status among adults (above 18 years) in Batticaloa district and to examine the associated socio-economic, nutritional and lifestyle factors with weight distribution.

A Cross-sectional survey was conducted among 400 adults aged above 18 years. Multi-stage sampling method was approached. Data on socio-economic, nutritional and lifestyle factors were collected with structured, interviewer administered questionnaire and anthropometric measurements of weight, height and waist circumference were measured by using appropriate measuring scales. Under weight, normal weight, over weight and obesity were defined as Body Mass Index (BMI) <18.5 kg/m², 18.5-23 kg/m², > 23 kg/m² and > 27.5 kg/m² respectively; waist circumference > 90 cm for men and >80 cm for women considered as presence of abdominal obesity. Nutritional status of adults and distribution of BMI by socio-demographic and lifestyle characteristics were assessed.

Among 400 adults 11.7 % were underweight, 40.5 % were normal weight 30.3 % overweight and 17.5% were obese in Batticaloa district. In urban areas among 80 adults 6.3% were underweight, 31.2% were normal weight, 35.0% were overweight and 27.5% were obese. In rural areas among 320 adults 13.1% were underweight, 42.8 % were normal weight, 29.1% overweight and 15.0% were obese. In the overall district, females were more overweight (17.3%) and obese (11.5%) than males. Adults belong to the age group of 35-44 years were more overweight and obese than others. Gender(p=0.03), age(p=0.000), marital status(p=0.01), ethnicity(p=0.02), occupation (p=0.026), smoking (p=0.005), alcohol intake (p=0.001), family history of overweight and obesity (p=0.009), sleeping habit after the meal in the evening (0.003), following weight reduction methods (p=0.000) were the significant factors (p<0.05) associated with nutritional status of adults. As overall, majority of adults were in normal weight. In urban areas nearly one third percentage of adults were overweight and in rural areas most of the adults were in normal weight.

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