Research Paper Education

Healthy Weight Management Practices Among Staff of Medical Centre, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

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ABSTRACT

The thrust of the study was to determine the healthy weight management practices among staff of medical Centre University of Nigeria Nsukka. The study was to ascertain whether the staff were involved in healthy or unhealthy weight management practices. The study also examined the reasons for the weight management practice. Two research questions guided the study. The descriptive survey was used in the study. The sample was made up of 8I staff of the medical centre. The researchers designed questionnaire was used for the study. The study revealed that 69.14% of the staff were involved in healthy weight management practices while 30.86% of them were involved in unhealthy practices. The finding shows that a good number of the staff were involved in healthy practices such exercises and eating of fruits. Some staff were involved in unhealthy practices like skipping of breakfast and use of drugs. It was recommended that the management of medical centre should periodically organize work shows to remind staff the need for healthy practices.

KEYWORDS Special education, dieting, exercise, medical, staff and university.

Introduction

Interest on weight concerns has been on the increase over the years. People all over the world are showing for interest on the states of their body weight. This is because of the increase awareness on the danger of accumulating excess body weight. The weight of the individual places a vital role determining his/her health. Weight according to Kent (2006) is the force exacted on an object by the gravitational pull of the earth. In the contest of this study weight is the force exacted by a body on the weighing scale due to gravitational well. This weight stands for total body weight of the individual.

Total body weight for every person has an ideal range based on many factors such as height, age, sex, body size and fats. Total body weight needs to remain with the healthy range in order for the individual to be in health. This however may not happen except the weight is properly managed.

Weight management is crucial to healthy living. Kent (2006) defined weight management as the ability to control body weight by appropriate balance of weight loses associated with energy expending exercise as well as energy gain as a result of intake of food. Weight management contributes to health of the individual hence people all over the world are making practice effort at managing their weight. In cause of doing this people are involved in a lot of practices which they suppose would lead to ideal body weight and consequently have optimum health.

Practice represents what people do or abstain from doing in order to achieve a certain goal. Brainy (2006) defined practices as frequently repeated or customary action, habitual performance, a succession of arts of similar kinds, usage, habit custom as the practice of rising early, the practice of making regular entries of account, the practice of daily exercise, skillful or unskillfull management. In the contest of this study practice refers to what one does or abstains from doing in a bit to manage the body weight. These are what are seen as weight management practices.

Weight management practices are vital in healthy weight, over-weight and underweight. Weight management practices from the foregoing can be said to be a set of practices and behaviours that are necessary to keep one's weight at a healthy level. There is a purpose for the practice of healthy weight management.

The main purpose of weight management practices is to achieve a balance between caloric output through physical activities and caloric intake through the food one takes. People are involved in different practices to enable them achieve this goal. Some of the practices these individuals are involved in are healthy while some are unhealthy. Healthy weight management practices have to do with healthy lifestyle. It involves eating healthy foods like vegetables and grains, healthy meats and low fat foods. It also includes taking part in physical activities as part of daily routine, not smoking, managing stress, changing ones thinking about certain things, not comparing oneself with others, paying attention to how hungry and how full you feel (Medical reverence, 2005). This study however is focused on the healthy weight management practices such as regular exercises, avoiding snacks in between meals, eating a lot of fruits, taking breakfast as a resolve, eating lots of vegetables, adequate diet and eating three meals each day of the week.

One question which needs an answer is the reason for people predicting weight management? Some of the reasons people have given in the past is to look smart, to have flat tummy, to lose weight, to be more attractive and elegant, to appeal my spouse and to be healthy (Keller, 2008). Predisposition may require medical assistance to help them lose weight and maintain their new body weight, (Royal College of Physician's 1998).

According to Bray (1992) overweight is associated with so many diseases which include hypertension, diabetes and arthritis. Bray further stated that underweight people are also exposed to some diseases, which include digestive and respiratory diseases, tuberculosis and infertility especially in females. Underweight can be caused by variety of factors, as anorexia nervosa, cancer, infection diseases, digestive tract disorders, and excessive physical activities. Genetic background may also lead to a higher resting metabolic rate, a slight body frame or both. Significant underweight is also associated with increased death rate, especially when combined with cigarette smoking. Health problems of underweight include the loss of menstrual function complication with pregnancy and surgery and slow recovery after illness. Sometimes underweight requires medical intervention. In growing children, the demand for energy to support physical activities and growth can cause underweight. During growth spurts in adolescents, active children may not take the time to consume enough energy to support their energy needs.

This study is carried out in University of Nigeria Nsukka, which is located in the South East of Nigeria. The University has only one Medical Centre within the main campus. The centre constitutes the area of the study. The centre is divided into 9 units which are as follows: medical, pharmacy, laboratory., health attendants, nursing, administrative, physiotherapy and dietetic units.

From the literature review, similar studies have been carried out on weight management practice among women to determine weight loss practice and percentage of the body fat of general populations of wrestlers in Tehran. Weight management practices among healthy and unhealthy weight loss practices of Latino women at a college in New York City, was studied by Mercad, (2008). This present study is carried out in a health institution to find out how health workers manage their weight. The essence of this study is to determine the weight management practices among staff of the University Medical Centre, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Methods

The descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The people for the study were made up of all the 81 staff of the medical centre, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. They are from all the eight units that make up the centre. The instrument for data collection was the researchers designed questionnaire. It comprised of section A for demographic information and section B for the main variables of the study. It instrument was validated by three experts from the Department of Health and Physical Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The researchers administered the instruments and the staff returned validly completed copy of the instrument and were anlaysed using simple percentages.

Results

The result for this study are presented in tables 1-3 in line with various research questions. F stands for frequency while % is for percentages

Table 1: Number of staff engaged in weight management practices n=81

Weight management practice	F	%
Engaged	50	69.14
Not engaged	25	30.86

Table 1 shows that 56 staff representing 69.14% of the study sample were engaged in weight management practices. Table 1 also shows that 25 or 30.86 percent of the staff were not engaged in any form of weight management practice at all.

Research question 1

What are the healthy weight management practices adopted by the staff?

Table 2: Adopted Healthy Weight Management Practices n=81

Practice	F	%
Regular exercises	48	85.71
Avoiding snacks in-between meals	6	10.71
Eating a lot of fruits	56	100
Taking breakfast as a rule	26	46.42
Eating a lot of vegetables	50	89.29
Adequate diet and exercising	22	39.28
Eating 3 square meal a day	21	37.5

Table 2 shows that 85.7% are involved in the practice of regular exercise. 10.71% avoid snacks in-between meals, 100% eat a lot of fruits, 89.29% eat a lot of vegetables. 46.42 take breakfast as a rule, 39.28% adopt adequate diet and exercising in managing weight and 37.5%Eating 3 square meal a day in their weight management.

Research question 2

What are the reasons for the weight management practice adopted by the staff?

Table 3: Reasons for Adopting Weight Management Practice n=56

Practice	F	%
To look smart	23	41.07
To have flat tummy	6	10.71
To lose weight	9	16.07
To be more attractive and elegant	7	12.50
To appeal to my spouse	2	3.57
To be healthy	37	66.07
Other reasons specify	-	-

Table 3 shows that 41.07% of respondent engage in weight management practice in order to look smart. 10.71% is to have flat tummy, 16.07% to lose weight, 12.50% to be more attractive and elegant, 3.57% to appeal to their spouse, 66.07% to be healthy and no other reason was specified.

Discussion

The result of the study shows that 69.14% of the staff were engaged in weight management practice. This agreed with the finding of Shuaibu (2004) who noted engaged in weight management practices and that eating more than 3 times a day promote weight gain. 30.36% are not engaged in weight management. The finding is a little bit surprising because one will naturally assume that since all the respondents are hospital workers, working in a university environment for that matter, they should know the importance of weight management in preventing health conditions. Research has discovered that most of the negative health consequences of obesity are improved or controlled by a relatively modest weight loss, perhaps as little as 10% of the patient body weight, (Gale Encyclopedia, 2004); they are expected to be aware of the fact that, if energy intake exceeds expenditure overtime, obesity is likely to result, often health problems eventually follow, (Wardlaw, 1999). From the findings, it is worrisome to note that some of the respondents are not sent on periodic training and medical check- ups to help them appreciate the need for weight management. This conforms with the finding of Lins and Mills (2001) that clear policy statement and safety training plays an important role in reducing accident rates.

The study shows that 10% of respondents; eat a lot of fruits and 89.29% eat a lot of vegetables. A healthy lifestyle means eating healthy foods like vegetables and whole grains, lean meat and low fat foods (Web MD Medical Reference, 2005). 85.71% engage in regular exercise. The number of respondent involved in exercise is somehow considerable. It could be because of increased enlightenment on the healthy values of exercise which is elaborated more on health institutions. These findings agreed with the National Health Interview Survey (1998) which revealed that participants interviewed on healthy

weight management practices were training to low weight and only 1/3 of those trying to lose weight were reported eating fewer calories and exercising more. Taking breakfast as a rule scores 46.42%. it is glaring that about half of the respondents are either ignorant of or fail to appreciate the need to take breakfast daily to help to set the system in good motion for the day. Skipping breakfast is one habit that is common to many people, they think that skipping it is a grew way to cut calories, but they usually end up eating more throughout the day says Elizabeth Ward, MS, RD, author of the pocket idiot guide to the new food pyramid (Web MD, 2005). 39.28% are involved in adequate dieting and exercising.

Eating 3 square meal a day is 37.50%. Less than half of the respondents eat 3 square meal a day, though it is a very good practice. The findings agreed with Wardlaw (2000) who stated that eating the right food at the right time for the right reason with increased physical activity and decreased food consumption (especially fat) even those with genetic tendency towards obesity can maintain a healthy or "healthier body weight".The researchers found out that some people like fruits but hate vegetables, they claim that their systems does not tolerate it. The above result is likely because the respondent worked in a health institution as a result many of them are more enlightened about health.

Table 3 shows that 41.07% wants to look smart, 16.9% wants to lose weight, 12.50% wants to be more attractive and elegant, 10.71% to have flat tummy, 3.57% to appeal to spouse. According to Wardlaw (2000) not every woman can be a size 10 nor can every man look like a Greek god, but all of us can strive for good health and if physically possible, an active lifestyle. By trying to lose weight in or dew to fall within a specific height-weight range, people often regain their original weight plus more (WHO). 66.07% engage in weight management to be healthy. This is in line with (WHO) which noted that health is a state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual well being and not merely the absence of disease. Healthy weight management is living a healthy lifestyle, healthy weight and have plenty energy for both work and play (Web MD Medical Reference). From the study the highest number of respondent practices weight management for healthy reason, the researchers think it is because of the wealth of knowledge they have acquired from working in a health institution.

Conclusion

Sequel to the finding of this study the following conclusions were draws:

1. A good number of staff of the medical centre was engaged in healthy weight management practices.
2. Weight management practice is popular among the staff of the medical centre.
3. There are several reasons why staff engages in weight management practice.

Recommendations

It was recommended that:

1. More staff should be encouraged to involve in weight management practices.
2. The management of the medical centre should organize regular workshops to encourage healthy weight management of practices by exposing the harmful effect of unhealthy practices.
3. The management of the medical centre should also organise seminar on healthy reasons for weight management.

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