

Study of Risk Factor Profile for Non Communicable Diseases amongst the Medical Students

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Background

A non-communicable disease, or NCD, is a medical condition or disease which by definition is non-infectious and non-transmissible among people. They include heart disease, stroke, diabetes and more. Medical students, owing to the pressure associated with this field often ignore their health, unhealthy eating habits, sleeping less and not exercising enough, the reason being the stress associated with this field.

Aims & Objectives

To assess certain factors responsible for susceptibility to non communicable diseases among medical students, along with the awareness and attitude towards prevention of these diseases and lastly to recommend remedial measures.

Material & Methods

The study was conducted in Kasturba Medical College. The study population consisted of students of 1st year MBBS. The students were given a questionnaire, which was based on some past surveys and guidelines given by the WHO. Consenting students were made to fill the form. The students also underwent weight and height measurements. The data so collected was analysed using SPSS version 11.5.

Results

111 students were interviewed, 54 were males and 57 were females, all in the 18 to 20 year age group. Based on the BMI 64 (61%) were normal 30 were underweight (29%) and 11 (10%) were overweight. Based on the food habits,

71% consumed non vegetarian food. Fruit consumption was less than 3 times for 59 (54%) students and 37 (33%) had more than 3 servings of fruits in a week, while 15 (13%) could not recall. Most of the students had more than 6 servings of vegetables in a week (76 (68%)), while only 18 (8%) consumed vegetables less than 3 times a week. 36 (33%) consumed restaurant food more than 3 times a week. 49 (44%) consumed junk food more than 3 times a week. 4 (4%) of the students mentioned using tobacco and alcohol in the past 30 days. While most of them preferred to sleep 37 (33%) or watch television/surf the internet 32 (29%), only 17 (15%) indulged in physical activity and 24 (22%) preferred to read novels in their free time. Majority of the students played sports (76%) out of which only 10 preferred indoor sports. Majority of the students did not go to the gym 88 (79%). 19 (17%) students had parents who suffered from NCDs, 23 (21%) had grandparents who suffered from NCDs. 13 (12%) had more than one relative who suffered from NCDs.

Conclusions

Even though not many students are overweight, the trend regarding healthy eating habits was disappointing. That along with lack of physical activity and genetic predisposition makes them susceptible to NCDs as adults. The students were educated about the ill-effects of unhealthy habits and NCDs in general. Recommendations were made to the college regarding the same. In a world plagued by non-communicable diseases, it is imperative that people inculcate a healthy lifestyle, and that can be brought about by creating awareness, this research aimed at doing that amongst medical students.