

Prevalence of obesity and its association with socioeconomic factors in elderly Iranians from Razavi-Khorasan Province

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Abstract

There are little data regarding the prevalence of obesity and its socioeconomic determinants among elderly individuals, particularly in Iran. We wished to determine the prevalence of overweight and obesity in free-living elderly people and the relationship to nutritional and socioeconomic factors in the Razavi-Khorasan province of Iran. Free-living elderly persons (914 males/1040 females), aged ≥ 60 years, were recruited using cluster sampling. Overweight and obesity were evaluated using body mass index (BMI) and subjects were categorized as thin ($BMI < 18.5$ kg/m²), normal ($18.5-24.9$ kg/m²), overweight ($25-29.9$ kg/m²), and obese (≥ 30 kg/m²). The association between the prevalence of overweight or obesity with socioeconomic and demographic factors, including gender, place of residence, literacy, type of living, source of income, use of supplements during the past 3 months, and employment status, was examined using regression analysis. The distribution of BMI values indicated that 13, 46.0, 28.9, and 11.9% of the total population were thin, normal, overweight, and obese, respectively. The prevalence of central obesity was higher among Iranian women than men (13.1 vs. 18.7%, respectively). Regression analysis results indicated that gender ($p < 0.001$), place of residence ($p < 0.001$), literacy ($p = 0.01$), and source of income ($p < 0.001$) were significantly associated with the incidence of overweight or obesity. This study showed that 40.6% of elderly subjects were overweight or obese. Results reinforce the need to plan strategies for primary prevention of this fast-growing public health problem. ©2009 with author. Published by TheScientificWorld.

Reaxys Database Information

Author keywords

Body mass index (BMI); Free-living elderly people (community dwellers); Malnutrition; Obesity; Socioeconomic status

Indexed Keywords

EMTREE medical terms: adult; aged; article; body mass; cluster analysis; demography; educational status; female; human; incidence; income; Iran; major clinical study; male; nutrition; obesity; prevalence; regression analysis; residential area; sex ratio; socioeconomics; middle aged; waist circumference

MeSH: Aged; Body Mass Index; Female; Humans; Iran; Male; Middle Aged; Obesity; Overweight; Prevalence; Socioeconomic Factors; Waist Circumference

Medline is the source for the MeSH terms of this document.

ISSN: 15377444X Source Type: Journal Original language: English

DOI: 10.1100/tsw.2009.139 PubMed ID: 19937074 Document Type: Article