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Prevalence of weight anomalies among adults in the eastern province of saudi arabia
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Abstract
Background: Lifestyle-related weight anomalies, particularly the obesity, have been spreading out rapidly over the past two decades in Saudi Arabia, reaching high records. Objectives: The aim of this primary data analysis was to determine the current prevalence and predict the future trend of such anomalies among the adult population of the largest region in the kingdom: the Eastern Province. Methods: A total of N=1,200 students (825 males, 375 females) aged 19-29, randomly selected from the main universities in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia: King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University, and Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, were asked to take a survey. The BMI was calculated and the prevalence was determined using the international classification as prescribed by WHO (2004). Chi-Square test was used to examine the significance of the effect of some variables on the BMI. Results: For the sample, the overall prevalence was 16% for obesity, 25% for overweight and 8% for underweight. The figures highly depended on the gender, with an obesity prevalence about 3.5 times higher among males (21%), overweight prevalence about 1.8 times higher among males (29%), and underweight prevalence of about 2.7 times higher among females (13.1%). Several factors were shown to be significantly associated with the BMI. As a result, a multiple linear model involving four variables (gender, age, fat intake and meal-replacement bars) was designed to predict with 95% of confidence, for the entire adult population of the Eastern Province, that by 2020, obesity prevalence will increase to 26.1% (±2.9%) for males from 21% (±2.7%) presently and will go up to 6.3% (±2.5%) for females from 5.9% (±2.4%) currently. As for overweight prevalence, it would remain unchanged 15.7% (±3.7%) for females but rise to 35.9% (±3.2%) from 29% (±3%) now for males. However, female underweight prevalence will go up to 16.3% (±3.7%) from 13.1% (±3.4%) now in less than one year. Conclusion: The results show concerning current and future trends of weight anomalies: obesity and overweight among males and underweight among females. The socio-ecological model is recommended to address this health issue in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia.

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