

Incidence of Overweight and Obesity among Urban and Rural Males of Amritsar

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Abstract

Global epidemic of obesity is one of the main public health problems in developed as well as developing countries. The present study was undertaken to assess the prevalence of overweight and obesity among urban and rural males of Amritsar district of Punjab. 1,000 adult males (500 urban and 500 rural) in the age group 20-50 years were screened for overweight and obesity from height and weight measurements. The prevalence rate of malnutrition was calculated according to the critical limits of body mass index (BMI). The observations show that the combined overall prevalence rate of overweight and obesity, according to WHO (1998) and WHO (2000) classification, in the present study is 24.7% and 46.1%, respectively. The frequency of overweight and obesity is more among urban males than in their rural counterparts.

Key Words: Body Mass Index, Overweight, Obesity, Punjabi Males

Introduction

As the pandemic of overweight and obesity around the globe continues to rise, many developing countries face a double burden of over nutrition and under nutrition (*WHO/FAO, 2002*). The scope and distribution of both types of malnutrition must be understood so that public health resources can be channelled appropriately. In recent years, India has controlled the problem of severe under nutrition to a substantial extent among young children but now facing a rising epidemic of overweight and obesity among children and adults. Only limited data on prevalence of overweight and obesity are available for adults in India. According to *WHO (1998)*, there is a special need to collect good quality nationally representative prevalence data on obesity from countries, those are undergoing the so-called nutrition

transition. India, especially the state of Punjab, is also passing through such a transitional phase of socio-economic development which has the potential of altering the nutritional status of her population groups. Therefore, in the present study, an attempt has been made to investigate the prevalence of overweight and obesity in urban and rural adult males of Amritsar district of Punjab.

Materials and Methods

The data for the present study have been collected from 500 urban and 500 rural males of age 20 years and above during the year 2004-2005. All subjects were of Punjabi origin and belonged to upper middle class with an income ranging from Rs. 10000 to Rs. 30000 per month. The majority of the urban data were collected from residential colonies, occupied by well-to-do officers, professors