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## **Prevalence and risk factors of overweight and obesity among adults in urban areas in Batticaloa district**

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Obesity is a chronic condition and the prevalence of adult obesity is increasing rapidly worldwide due to environmental and behavioral changes such as urbanization and modernization. Data on prevalence and determinants of obesity in developing countries including the different regions are needed for primary prevention. This study was undertaken to assess the prevalence of overweight and obesity among adults (above 18 years) in urban areas in Batticaloa district and to examine the associations of overweight and obesity with socio-economic, nutritional and lifestyle factors.

A Cross-sectional survey was conducted among 160 adults aged above 18 years. Multistage sampling method was applied. Data on socio-economic, nutritional and lifestyle factors were collected with structured, interviewer administered questionnaire and anthropometric measurements of weight, height and waist circumference were measured by using appropriate measuring scales. Obesity was defined as Body Mass Index (BMI) > 27.5 kg/m<sup>2</sup> and overweight as BMI > 23 kg/m<sup>2</sup>; waist circumference > 90 cm for men and >80 cm for women considered as not-normal. Prevalence of overweight and obesity and distribution of BMI by socio-demographic and lifestyle characteristics was assessed.

Prevalence of overweight and obesity were 21.4% and 16.8 % respectively. Prevalence of overweight was high in males (19.4%) and in the age group of 45- 54 years (7.5%); obesity prevalence was high in females (19.3%) as well as in the age group of 35-44 years (7.2%). Alcoholism, family history of overweight and obesity, occupation, following weight reduction methods were the significant factors (p<0.05) associated with overweight and obesity.

Prevalence of overweight was higher than obesity. Females were more obese than males. Awareness programs should be carried out in the community regarding weight reduction measures and primary prevention of overweight and obesity by eliminating risk factors. Health education programs have to be done for public regarding the consequences of overweight and obesity

**Key words:** *Obesity, Overweight, Prevalence, Health Education*

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