ASSESSING DIETARY INTAKE, EATING AND EXERCISE ATTITUDES, AND FITNESS LEVELS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: The transition from high school to University can be a stressful lifestyle change for young adults. During this transition students develop a variety of health attitudes and behaviours that may have a negative impact on their overall wellbeing.

OBJECTIVE: To determine the correlation of BMI to dietary intake, fitness level and eating and exercise attitudes of University students.

METHODS: Participants completed an eating and exercise attitude survey, 2-day diet recall, and preformed three fitness tests at a Midwestern University through their Campus Recreational Centre. Seven hundred seventy two students between the ages of 18-25 from a Bule Hora University between the years of July 2016-July 2021. Calculations were performed to determine the subject's BMI and Mean Adequacy Ratio (MAR). Rankings for three areas of fitness were based on tables provided by the YMCA Fitness Testing and Assessment Manual Fourth Edition.

RESULTS: The mean age of the subjects studied was 19.8 + 1.5 with seventy-seven percent of the total population being 20 years old or younger. There was a mean BMI of 23.5 + 4.9 with sixty-six percent (n=507), having a BMI that placed them in the normal classification. Around 72 percent (n=559) had a MAR score of less than 80 indicating an inadequate consumption of nutrients. When the MAR scores of the total population were compared to BMI no significant correlation was found (p=.970). On the Eating Attitudes Questionnaire, only 13 percent scored greater than 4 indicating disordered eating patterns. Results showed that BMI had a significant positive correlation with the Eating Score. As BMI increased the subjects' cardiovascular fitness levels decreased.

Key words: Dietary, exercise, fitness

Biography

Bilen Tewabe Mamo is a lecturer and researcher in Ethiopian Higher Academic Institution