

13th Euro Obesity and Endocrinology Congress and 16th World Congress on Nutrition and Food Chemistry

September 18-20, 2017 | Zurich, Switzerland

Obesity and metabolic risk indices among women small holder farmers living in Durban-Mariannhill, South Africa

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Adulthood obesity particularly among women is a growing concern that can be exacerbated by menopause. This also leads to a declining metabolic rate causing obesity as well as central obesity. These factors impact women's health and can compromise agricultural production. The objective of the study was to determine the nutritional status which included anthropometrics to determine BMI, WC, WTHR scores among women who are actively involved in farming which is perceived as a form of physical exercise. The study was descriptive in nature comprised of 89 women between ages of 43- 85 years with a mean age of 63.3. All participants selected were part of the municipal agricultural programme database. Participants gave willing consent to participate in the study. This investigation was part of the Ethekewini municipality initiative. Results indicated that the majority of the women were generally obese (>30->40) at 70.7% followed by those overweight (25-29.99) at 18.0% which suggests that almost 88.7% of the population was over-nourished. Respondents who were within the normal weight (18.5-24.99) were 7.9% while only 3.4% were underweight (<18.5). The majority of women exceeded (84.3%) the cut off points for waist circumference (≤ 88 cm) while a minority (15.7%) were within the recommended scores (≤ 88 cm). These results correlate with the BMI of women being obese in two forms. However, central obesity was a higher form of obesity detected when comparing the two. Waist to hip ratio (Wthr) as metabolic risk factor was exceeded (≥ 0.5) by 88.8% of the population while 11.2% were within the recommended scores (< 0.5). Agricultural activity as a form of physical exercise among small holder farmers did not address obesity prevalence. Interventions should investigate dietary intake as well as other risk factors to address this challenge among these farmers.

Biography

Xolile Mkhize is a PhD student in the field of Food and Nutrition at Durban University of Technology. Her research project focuses on legume production and consumption within elderly farmers in addressing food insecurity. She is currently working as a Senior Lecturer in the field of Food and Nutrition in Department of Community Extension at Mangosuthu University of Technology for the past three years and has also worked at other academic institutions such (Durban University of Technology and University of Zululand). She has worked in various community research projects focusing on food and nutrition security among vulnerable groups and also involved in the promotion of urban agriculture in city of Durban. She has over eight years of industrial experience in the food industry.

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