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Meat consumption among Sharjah residents: Knowledge, attitude and practices

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Overconsumption of meat is an escalating phenomenon in the UAE that might account for the current unwanted outcomes, including the surge in the incidences of cardio-metabolic diseases and cancers over the past few decades. Our study thus focused on investigating the level of knowledge of Sharjah residents, comparing their consumption of meat to the current recommended daily intake, and outlining the factors leading to their unhealthy consumption. This cross-sectional study included 400 participants (50% were males) at the age of 18-50, and data was collected by convenience using interview-based questionnaires and visual aids. Knowledgeable participants (Arabs and Non-Arabs) were found to be more likely to consume processed meat (OR= 1.86), and 68% of Arabs thought grilling is the healthiest way of preparation. Similarly, most of the obese and overweight participants were knowledgeable yet, only 1/4th of them had a healthy practice. Expectedly, unmarried participants were more likely to consume deep fried meat despite their awareness of its harms (OR= 2.11) while married participants over-consumed grilled fish. Moreover, we have found that only a minority of the steak over-consumers are aware of their false practice, unlike the fish over-consumers. Alarming, the working age group had an inadequate knowledge regarding meat, 57.3% of them were below high school level and had their friends as their primary source of knowledge.

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