



The Relationship Between Obesity and Prevalence of Chronic Diseases in the Arab Women

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ABSTRACT The aim of this paper was to find out the association between obesity, based on body mass index (BMI), and some chronic diseases among Arab women living in Qatar. A sample of 535 women aged 20-67 years were selected and interviewed in four main health centers in Qatar. Weight and height were taken, as well as history of five chronic diseases; diabetes (II), hypertension, osteoarthritis, coronary heart disease and sleep apnoea. Relative risk (RR) and confidence interval were computed to determine the risk of diseases among obese and non-obese women stratified by age. The prevalence of overweight and obesity (BMI = 25) was very high (66.7%). The risk of chronic diseases varied according to obesity and age of women. However, in general all chronic diseases were higher among obese than non-obese women. Obese younger women (aged 20-29 years) had more risk for diabetes (RR=11.2) and hypertension (RR=3.0) than non-obese older women (= 30 years). The risk for osteoarthritis was higher among obese women aged 40-49 years (RR=2.05) and those aged = 50 years (RR=4.38). The findings suggest the need for joint effort to prevent and control obesity in the Arab community, in order to control chronic diseases.

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