

Obesity and Diet

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Background: Obesity is one of the most common disorders encountered in clinical practice and has major public health implications. It is also one of the most difficult and frustrating disorders to manage successfully. Nutritional management of obesity should be based on the best available scientific evidence.

Methods: in this presentation the assessment and nutritional management of obesity will be described based on the best available evidence for Saudi people. Healthy balanced diet and common fad diets will be discussed as well as the common wrong beliefs about obesity management.

Results: the main process of obesity treatment includes the assessment of obesity degree using several measures such as Body Mass Index and Waist Circumference (WC). The use of these measures should be used with caution for Saudi people as indicated by recent studies in this area.¹ Obesity treatment also includes the reduction of excess weight and maintenance of this lower body weight using the best available scientific approaches. Findings from the systematic mini reviews provided low to medium level evidence for the use of some novel dietary interventions such as the high intake of calcium, PUFA or fiber to assist with weight loss or maintenance. There was also similar evidence for the use of a low glycemic index diet. Higher eating frequency, not exceeding 6 meals per day, may also help in weight reduction. Regular breakfast intake also appears to be associated with lower body weight. Our recent work on the nutritional adequacy of common fad diets in Saudi Arabia showed that none of these diets are appropriate for weight loss.²

Conclusion: The use of healthy balanced diet approach is the best available scientific approach for weight loss.

¹Almajwal A, Al-Baghli N, Batterham M, Williams P, Al-Turki K, Al-Ghamdi A. Performance of Body Mass Index in predicting diabetes and hypertension in the Eastern province of Saudi Arabia. Ann Saudi Med. 2009;29(6):437-445

, Ali Almajwal, Peter Williams, Jafar El-Qudah Evaluation of nutritional adequacy of popular fad diets in Saudi Arabia