

A-41 The prevalence of obesity in a Sri Lankan community

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We carried out a study to assess the prevalence of obesity in a suburban/rural community. The target population comprised 8462 adults (30-65 years) in 10 randomly selected Grama Niladari Divisions in the Yatinuwara electorate. Out of 720 randomly selected, 328 agreed to take part in the study. Of these 265 (80.8%) finally participated in the study. 79% of them were Sinhala, 17.7% Muslim and 3.3% were Tamils.

The mean (SD) for body mass index (BMI) (for males was 20.47 (3.15) and for females 20.87 (3.7)). The mean (SD) for waist hip ratio for males and females were 0.9 (0.05) and 0.88 (0.08) respectively. Obesity defined as a BMI > 25 for women and > 27 for men was seen in 5.66% males and 14.46% females. Waist hip ratio of >0.85 for females and >0.88 for males has been shown to confer a greater coronary risk. According to these criteria 62.26% of females and 62.26% males had a higher coronary risk. The 90th percentile for waist hip ratio for males is 0.95 and for females 0.98.

Obesity was more common in females ($p < 0.05$). Since the 90th percentile for waist hip ratio for males is 0.95 and for females 0.98 the criteria used for defining central obesity for Western populations (>1 for males and above 0.85 for females) appear inappropriate for our population.