

Correlates of Overweight among Adult Women in Kerala: A Study Based on National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3)

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KEYWORDS Nutrition. Underweight. Obesity. BMI. Diet Variables. Behavioral Characteristics

ABSTRACT The aim of this paper is to study the extent of overweight and obesity among adult women in Kerala and to examine the association between overweight and background characteristics. The analysis is based on 3370 ever married women of age group (15-49) in Kerala, whose Body Mass Index (BMI) is available in NFHS-3 data. BMI was used to define overweight ($24.9 < \text{BMI} < 30.0 \text{ Kg/m}^2$) and obese ($\text{BMI} > 30.0 \text{ Kg/m}^2$). Covariates included in the study are working status, occupation, wealth index, diet variables, behavioral variables and disease prevalence. Logistic regression method was used to estimate the effects of these variables on overweight. Findings shows that wealth index, occupation, consumption of milk or curd, fruits, fish, chicken or meat and alcohol are significantly related with BMI. Diseases, namely, Diabetes, Asthma, Goitre or Thyroid also have a significant relation with BMI. Among behavioral characteristics, frequency of reading newspaper and frequency of watching television were found to have a significant association with BMI. Study evidenced that consumption of heavy food may lead to an increase in the number of overweighted persons in Kerala and so there is an urgent need to implement programs to ensure food security for the poor and to understand the components of a healthy life style.