

World Congress on
DIABETES AND ENDOCRINOLOGY
August 22-23, 2018 Rome, Italy

Meat consumption among Sharjah residents: Knowledge, attitude and practices

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Overconsumption of meat is an escalating phenomenon in the UAE resulting in a wide range of 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 haphazardly by convenience using interview-based questionnaires and visual aids. Our results have demonstrated that Arabs and well-educated participants were more likely to consume processed meat and thought grilling is the healthiest way of preparation. Also, most of the obese and overweight participants were knowledgeable yet, unable to maintain a healthy practice. Surprisingly, unmarried and knowledgeable participants were more likely to consume deep fried meat despite their awareness of its harms while married participants over-consumed grilled fish. Alarming, the working age group had an inadequate knowledge regarding meat since their educational level was below high school and had their friends as their primary source of information. In conclusion, our participants had an overall strong desire to over-consume fish and were unaware of their beef over-consumption. Arabic participants were under the misconception of grilling is the healthiest way of preparation yet, they over-consumed deep-fried processed meat. Finally, this study offers a better understanding of the factors leading to unhealthy meat consumption; hence preventative interventions can be developed to decrease the prevalence of cancer and cardio-metabolic diseases in the UAE.

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