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Obesity/overweight status and associated factors among Saudi female population

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During the last few decades, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) experienced rapid socio-cultural changes caused by the accelerating economy in the Arabian Gulf region. That was associated with major changes in the food choices and eating habits which, progressively, became more and more “Westernized”. Such a nutritional transition has been claimed for the rising rates of overweight and obesity which were recently observed among Saudi population. Therefore, the objectives of the current study were to determine the overweight and obesity status in a sample of females Saudi adults and to determine the relationship between the obesity and factors associated. A total of 1500 female participants of age ≥ 19 from Makkah governorate were included the study. A self-reported questionnaire was conducted to collect the data. It composed of socio-economic data, disease history, food habits and anthropometric measurements. Overweight and obesity were defined according to internationally standardized criteria for classification of BMI. Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 16.0. The data indicated that 23.9% of Saudi female adults were overweight and 27.7% were obese. The most common eating habits encountered were eating two main meals/day, consumed meals with family, drinking fresh juices, sweets and the meals consist mostly of protein. Statistically significant direct correlations were found among these factors ($P < 0.005$). More than 50% of the Saudi adults females were obese or overweight. Additional monitoring of the obesity status is necessary.