

أخبار البوابة

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Study highlights the influence of cultural and social factors on healthy lifestyle for Arabic women

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A study recently published in Avicenna an open access, peer reviewed journal from QScience.com and headed by Dr. Tam Truong Donnelly of the University of Calgary-Qatar shows that cardiovascular disease and coronary artery diseases such as acute myocardial infarction is rising rapidly in Qatar. Funded by the Qatar National Research Fund, a team of researchers which comprised of Dr. Jassim Al Suwaidi, Senior Consultant cardiologist at Hamad Medical Corporation HMC, and a team of nurses from HMC: Asma Al Bulushi, Noora Al Enazi, Khadra Yassin, Asma Mohammad Rehman, Asmaa Abu Hassan, Zeinab Idris conducted a study to find ways to promote cardiovascular health and cardiovascular diseases prevention activities among Qatari women (citizen and resident Arabic women) by exploring factors affecting the ways in which women participate in physical activities, healthy diet and smoking.

Studies show that in Qatar, cardiovascular disease and coronary artery diseases such as acute myocardial infarction is rising rapidly. It has also been reported that adult Qataris are at high risk of ischemic strokes due to hypertension, diabetes mellitus, hypercholesterolemia, and smoking. Additionally, excessive weight gain and obesity as a result of physical inactivity and unhealthy diet can lead to metabolic changes and raise the risk of heart disease. This is a concern for Qatari women of whom, according to the WHS (2006), only 40% reported regular participation in sports or other physical activities. Other factors contributing to obesity in Middle Eastern women according to the study by MUSAIGER et al. include the following: the idea that exercise for women is not widely accepted by the culture; meals consisting predominantly of carbohydrates, oils, butters and cream, and a preference for women to be heavy-set.

The study highlights that although cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of mortality and morbidity worldwide and the incidence is increasing, these health problems can be prevented and/or controlled by modifying lifestyle risk behaviours related to physical activity, diet, and smoking habits.

Study participants included 50 Qatari women, 30 years of age and over, having a confirmed diagnosis of coronary vascular disease /coronary artery diseases. According to

the study, the results showed that socio-cultural factors play a key role in Qatari women's decisions to participate in healthy lifestyles.

The study participants pointed out that many Qatari women are aware of and want to have a healthy lifestyles, however, it is difficult for them to engage in regular physical activities, eating a diet that has more fruit and vegetable and less oil and fat because of the influence of many social and cultural factors. Participants also observed that even though smoking is a culturally taboo and socially unacceptable behavior, the younger Qatari generation thinks differently. They noticed that water-pipe (sheesha) smoking is emerging as a fashionable mode of tobacco use in Qatar, especially among young girls. There is an assumption that for these individuals, smoking sheesha is more acceptable than smoking cigarettes.

While the increase in cardiovascular disease has risen markedly over the past several decades, the study participants offered their recommendations to promote healthy lifestyles among women which could lead to prevention of and better management for cardiovascular diseases in Qatar. Their recommendations emphasized health education as one of the main strategies to increase awareness.

Dr. Donnelly said. "Our study highlighted the importance of considering cultural, social and religious factors when developing strategies to promote healthy lifestyle in Qatar. Any educational, health promotion and disease prevention programs developed without considering these factors are likely to be less effective. The information gained from the study might be useful for the promotion of healthy lifestyle among Arabic women living in the Gulf region. "



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