

Obesity trends in Sub-Saharan Africa: What endanger its status?

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Background: The food system of the world is framed by globalization, liberalization and industrialization. While the benefits of a globalized food system are apparent, industrial food production, processing, trade, marketing and retailing are a major stressor to the planet and contribute to the nutrition and epidemiological transitions taking place in developing countries. In 2014, more than 1.9 billion adults, 18 years and older, were overweight and of these over 600 million were obese (WHO, 2015). WHO also indicates that the worldwide prevalence of obesity has doubled between 1980 and 2014. Once considered a high-income country problem, overweight and obesity are now on the rise in low- and middle-income countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan African countries and this status may be a signal of future vulnerability for Sub-Saharan African population. Even though there are numerous studies dedicated in prevalence of overweight/obesity and food pattern, there is no any research done that studies the shifting trend in food consumption particularly in Sub-Saharan African region during the past one and half decade.

Objective: To determine overweight and obesity prevalence trends in Sub-Saharan African and identify changes in calories intake and diet.

Methodology: An extensive literature review applying a descriptive documentary research design using quantitative approaches was done using existing secondary data retrieved by a computer based search from databases of PubMed, Medline, Google scholar and Google search engines produced in English language during 2000-2015, including source materials such as: the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) of Sub-Saharan Africa countries, World Bank, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNAIDS, UNICEF and Scientific publications. Obesity and overweight are defined based on World Health Organization guidelines as BMI > 30 kg/m² and BMI >25 kg/m² respectively (WHO, 2015).

Results:

Notes: