

Obesity trends in Emiratis and non-Emiratis with Type 2 diabetes in the last 10 years: 2007 – 2017

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Background

Estimates of obesity rates in the UAE have shown an increasing trend in the last 40 years. Whether these trends can be generalized to the nation-wide diabetic population is unclear.

Aim

Analysis of obesity trends between 2007 and 2017 among Emiratis and non-Emiratis with or without type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM).

Methods

Adults (82% Emirati, 48.5% male, 63.7% with T2DM) attending ICLDC, Abu Dhabi between 2007 (n= 7679) and 2017 (n= 90372) were included in this study. Individuals were grouped according to their gender and ethnicity (Emirati or non-Emirati). Obesity was defined as body mass index (BMI) ≥ 30 Kg/m².

Results

There was an increasing trend in obesity prevalence between 2007 and 2012, from 39.1% (Emirati: 44.7%, non-Emirati: 33.6%) to 48.1% (Emirati: 48.9%, non-Emirati: 44.9%). This was followed by a decrease in obesity prevalence between 2013 and 2017 by 7.9% in Emirati and 4.6% in non-Emirati females ,and 3.4% in Emirati and 3.6% in non-Emirati males. Between 2007 and 2010, among individuals with T2DM, obesity rates increased by 1.4% in Emirati and 4.4% in non-Emirati females, and 0.9% in Emirati and 4.8% in non-Emirati males, but remained stable between 2011 and 2017.

Conclusion

Our data on a UAE diabetic population could challenge WHO estimates on weight trends in UAE general population, indicating stable or decreasing obesity trends in people with diabetes. This may be an indication of slowing or reversal of the projected upward trends in obesity prevalence as a result of public health and other interventions.