

PREVALENCE OF CARDIOVASCULAR RISK FACTORS IN YOUNG ADULTS STUDYING FOR THEIR FIRST YEAR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIÈGE

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Background: The prevalence of cardiovascular risk factors (RF) is not well known in young students. The present study would like to partially fill this gap with the idea to propose an educational program for improvement of these risk factors by diet and lifestyle modifications in the near future during the following years of their studies.

Method: During the last week of March 2007, all the students registered in the first year of all sections of learning at the University of Liège were invited to participate: they had to fill a questionnaire and to have their weight, height, abdominal circumference, blood pressure (BP) (OMRON device) and total cholesterol (capillary method Roche Diagnostics) measured.

Results: Only 693 students participated (296 men and 397 women), mean age 19y. From the filled form, it has been noted that 14.9% were active smokers (9.5% illicit drugs consumers). The mean BMI was 22 Kg/m² in men and 21 in women (8.5% with a BMI > 25).

The abdominal circumference was 78 and 71 cm for males and females, respectively (59-109 cm). Mean total cholesterol reached 158 mg/dL (12.4% with a value > 190mg/dL).

For the BP, 11% of the participants presented values > or = 140/90 mm Hg at the 3 measures performed when the first one was higher than the normal range.

Among the whole population, 30% had a family history of diabetes and 70% had no idea of their cholesterol or BP value.

Conclusions: Although these results are preliminary, coming from a small sample of all the students registered in the first year of the different courses at the ULg, it already shows that more than 10% of this young population present at least one RF for cardiovascular disease, some cumulating even 2 or 3 RF. A tight follow up seems thus to be necessary and will be organized this year in our University, with different activities to improve the knowledge and application of good health advices.