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Differences in dieting practices among young females of different weight

Background: Nowadays, young females are seeking optimal fitness most of the time through unhealthy practices. Most females don't follow the health recommendations on dietary guidelines. Normal weight female behaves differently than overweight and obese female and perceive food and diet practices in other ways. Since those dieting practices are not always adapted to promote a healthy body weight, this study aims to determine the dieting practices used among normal, overweight and obese female and identify dieting practices that could be pursued to help these females more appropriately achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.

Methods: A total of 120 females aged 18 to 26 years participated in this study. Height, weight, waist and hip circumferences and skinfold thickness were measured to assess body composition. Surveys included food questionnaire and physical activity recall. Participants were classified according to body mass index (BMI) as normal weight (n=80), overweight (n=25), or obese (n=15). Data were analyzed using JMP IN[®] software. Descriptive statistics included means, standard deviations, and frequency.

Results: Majority of participants (79%) used dieting for weight loss and believed they would be almost 4% greater than current weight if they did not diet; normal weight,


overweight, and obese groups perceived attractive weight to be 94%, 85%, and 74% respectively, of current weight; 75% of participants reported using physical activity to control weight, although only 21% exercised at a sufficient level to promote weight loss; only two of 15 dieting behaviors assessed differed in terms of prevalence of use among groups, which were consciously eating less than you want (44% normal weight, 57% overweight, 81% obese) and using artificial sweeteners (31% normal weight and overweight, 5% obese); and the most prevalent explicit maladaptive weight loss behavior was smoking cigarettes (used by 9% of participants) and most unhealthy was skipping breakfast (32%).

Conclusion: Collectively, results indicate females, regardless of weight status, would benefit from open discussions and education sessions with health educators regarding healthy and effective dieting practices to achieve/maintain a healthy body weight.

Speaker Biography

Vera Matta is a registered dietitian, she has a master's degree in nutritional psychotherapy and a PhD in counseling and nutritional psychotherapy. She is a current researcher in many health topics like diabetes, obesity. She is a therapeutic dietitian, treating all kind of nutrition related diseases and a consultant for many food related companies.

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