

Subtheme 3: Education, the pandemic, and beyond

OP21

**Prevalence of obesity and overweight and associated sociodemographic and work-related factors among the staff working at Divisional Secretariat Offices, Nallur and Jaffna.**

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**Background and Objective:** Obesity is one side of the double burden of malnutrition. The prevalence of overweight and obesity has increased over time. Hence, we carried out a study to estimate the prevalence of obesity and overweight and associated sociodemographic and work-related factors among the staff working at Divisional Secretariat Offices, Nallur and Jaffna.

**Methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among staff working at Divisional Secretariat Offices, Nallur and Jaffna. Simple random sampling technique was used, and the recruited sample size was 357. An interviewer-administered questionnaire was used to collect data on socio-demographic and work-related factors (type of work and work demand). Anthropometric measurements were taken and BMI was calculated and then categorized as underweight (<18.5 kg/m<sup>2</sup>), normal weight (18.5–24.9 kg/m<sup>2</sup>), overweight (25–29.9 kg/m<sup>2</sup>), and obese (≥30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>). Bivariate analysis was carried out on SPSS.

**Results:** The majority were females (60.5%), married (87.1%), graduated (72.5%), Tamils (99.7%), Hindus (83.5%), field workers (56.6%), and having moderate workload (62.5%). Underweight, normal weight, overweight, and obesity were recorded among 3.1% (n=11), 40.4% (n=144), 42% (n=15,0), and 14.6% (n=52) of the staff. Half (n=70) of the males were overweight and 9.2% (n=13) were obese. Among females, the prevalence of overweight and obesity was 37% (n=80), and 18.1% (n=39), respectively. Associations were not found between socio-demographic or work-related factors with BMI category, except with respect to religion (p=0.019). The prevalence of overweight or obesity was higher in Christians than in Hindus.

**Conclusions:** The prevalence of overweight and obesity was relatively high in this study population. Work-related factors were not found to be associated with the BMI category. We recommend carrying out periodical BMI assessments at the DS office in order to encourage staff to maintain their BMI at a healthy level.

**Keywords:** Obesity, Overweight, Sociodemographic factors, Work demand