PREVALENCE OF HYPERTENSION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS IN JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: Adequate control of hypertension which is adjudged a risk factor for cardiovascular disease requires management. College students in Jackson state university may experience special challenges in identifying this very common problem due to busy schedule in academic work. Hypertension can lead to irreversible damage in vital organs such as kidney, heart, brain and may cause death in adolescents and early adult age if not properly treated. An analysis of cross-sectional survey of 30 college students aged between 30-54 years, predominantly blacks mainly African’s and considered vulnerable to characterize prevalence of hypertension and its risk factors such as smoking, age, family history, overweight/obesity, lack of physical exercise. A self-administered questionnaire was used for collecting information on age, gender, smoking habits, weight, height, family history of hypertension, knowledge of hypertension and its risk factors, exercise engagement and alcohol intake. Blood pressure was determined using an electronic Omron sphygmomanometer on the right arm. Results show that 33.3% of participants were female (n=10), and 66.7% were males (n=20). Mean of age was 38.73 years and mean of BMI was 27.280. 20% of the participants were classified as having hypertension (n=6) and 80% classified as not having hypertension based on blood pressure of systolic equal to or more than 140/90 mmHg. It was discovered that all the participants with hypertension had BMI more than or equal to 25 and are either overweight or obese. Also 10% of females were classified as having hypertension (n=1) and 25% of males had hypertension (n=5) and all reported a family history and alcoholic intake. Descriptive analysis, Chi-square and correlation were used on SPSS to characterize the variables. The result suggest that hypertension may be an important public health problem among this group of students and that obesity and positive family history are considered as risk factors. Hence researchers should consider this factors in future research on this vulnerable group for early detection and management.