

Evaluation of Employees Fruit Consumption and its relation with Body Mass Index

J. Duarte¹, V. Costa¹, C. Calixto², E. Carolino³, L. Mendes¹

¹Dietetics and Nutrition Department, Lisbon School of Health Technology, IPL- Portugal; ²SIMAS-Serviços Intermunicipalizados de Água E Saneamento de Oeiras e Amadora- Portugal; ³H&TRC- Health & Technology research Center, ESTeSL- Lisbon School of Health Technology- IPL

The fruit intake in Portugal is below recommended levels despite evidence of the health benefits of regular consumption. Research indicates that there is an inverse relationship between fruit consumption and excessive weight. The workplace may be an ideal location for nutrition and health interventions, for example, in the context of occupational health, because of the potential health benefits for employees and associated decreases in absenteeism and sick leave. Employees spend a lot of their time at work which can represent a good setting for interventions to promote fruit consumption and weight control. The purpose of the present study was to evaluate the fruit intake status of employees and to examine the relationship between fruit intake and Body Mass Index (BMI).

From 443 employees, 320 answered to a self-administered questionnaire that included questions about anthropometric measurements and fruit and vegetables frequency consumption. Were obtained a employees sample with 47[Symbol]10 years, predominantly male (60.9%) and with a similar frequency of professional activity, with 41.3% of operational assistant and 37.9% of technical assistant. It was found a BMI average of 26.0[Symbol]4.8 kg/m² with higher prevalence of BMI \geq 25 kg/m² (53.6%) of which 14.4% were obese. A significant association between BMI and gender ($p=0.000$) was found and operational assistant had higher BMI ($p=0.0004$).

The results showed that 57.9% of employees had a daily fruit intake below the minimum recommended (<2-3portions) and 13.5% consumed at maximum once a week, but no relation was found with BMI. Fruit intake was higher in female ($U=8443$; $p=0.027$) and in employees with positions with higher education ($p=0.015$). Also was found that females had better food habits and who had higher intake of fruit also had better food habits such as cooked vegetables intake ($r_s=0.183$; $p=0.002$), vegetable salads intake ($r_s=0.209$; $p=0.000$) and soup consumption ($r_s=0.204$; $p=0.001$).

With these study findings we can conclude that there is a lack of relation between fruit intake and BMI. We can also conclude that the fruit intake was below recommended and should be improved and there is a high prevalence of employees with excessive weight that should be controlled and reduced. The workplace is a good setting to develop a nutrition program to reach these goals.