

RISK FACTORS FOR NON COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AMONG SEMI-RURAL ADULTS AND THE ASSOCIATION OF THESE FACTORS WITH SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES: FINDINGS FROM THE WHO STEPS SURVEY IN KILOLO DISTRICT, IRINGA, TANZANIA, 2007

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BACKGROUND

Non Communicable diseases (NCDs) are a major health threat to the world's population including developing countries. Although circumstantial evidence indicates that the incidence of NCDs in Tanzania is on the rise, there is no data on the risk factors. We examined the prevalence of selected risk factors for NCDs and the association of these factors with sociodemographic variables in a representative sample of adults in a semi-rural district in Tanzania.

Methods:

A total of 383 adults aged 25-64 years from Iringa (Kilolo) district were surveyed in June 2007, using the WHO STEPwise standard questionnaire (step 1 to 3) on surveillance of NCDs risk factors. Blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol and body mass index (BMI) were assessed, and self-reported smoking and alcohol intake recorded. Subsequently, we look on the association of selected risk factors with NCDs and socio demographic variables using Odds ratios and the 95%CI.

RESULTS

The prevalence of alcohol consumption and tobacco smoking was 71% (95%CI: 66%-75%) and 6 % (95%CI: 4%-9%) respectively. The overall prevalence of hypertension (defined as BP $\geq$ 140/90) was 36% (43% among men and 57% among women). Mean cholesterol levels was 4.9 mmol/l (SD=2.1). Older age was significantly associated with smoking (OR =3.5, 95%CI, 1.01-11.9), being hypertensive (OR=3.9, 95% CI 2.0-7.6) and having high cholesterol levels i.e $\geq$ 5.2mmol/l (OR=7.5, 95%CI 1.4-41.4). Education was found to influence hypertension and alcohol consumption; with those having secondary school and above being more hypertensive (OR=2, 95%CI 1.27-3.15) while those with lower than class seven education consuming more alcohol (OR=1.75, 95%CI 1.06-2.91).

CONCLUSION

The prevalence of risk factors for NCDs in semi rural district of Kilolo is high. There is an urgent need of addressing the situation. These results form a baseline for the planning process for interventions activities for NCDs. The Ministry is currently in the process of finalizing a national strategic plan.

Key words: Risk Factors, Non Communicable Diseases, STEPWise approach, Tanzania