Dietary, social, and environmental determinants of obesity in Kenyan women.

Abstract:

To assess the determinants of overweight and obesity in Kenyan women considered to be undergoing the nutrition transition. A nationally representative sample of women (n = 1008) was randomly drawn. Weight, height, waist, and hip circumference were measured. A 24-hour dietary recall was conducted with each participant and a socio-demographic questionnaire completed. Data was analysed by age, education, location, and socioeconomic status. Risk for obesity was calculated while adjusting for age and location. Overweight and obesity (BMI ≥ 25 kg/m(2)) were highly prevalent in Kenya (43.3%). Urbanisation appears to be an important determinant of obesity since obesity was most prevalent in urban women in the high income group. Women in the high income group (7278 kJ) and in urban areas (7049 kJ) had the highest mean energy intakes. There were also significant urban/rural and income differences in the contribution of macronutrients to energy intake. Total fat intake was 34.5% of energy (E) in urban areas and 29.7% E in rural areas; while carbohydrates contributed 69.9% E in rural areas and 57.4% E in urban areas (p < 0.0001). Overweight was significantly more likely in the highest income group; among households where room density was low; electricity or gas was used for cooking; and households had own tap and/or own flush toilet. This study suggests that urbanisation and its associated economic advancement as well as changes in dietary habits are among the most important determinants of overweight and obesity in Kenyan women.