

Urbanisation and the nutrition transition: a comparison of diet and weight status of South African and Kenyan women

Abstract:

To determine and compare the extent of the nutrition transition between Kenyan and South African women. A nationally representative sample of women aged ≥ 15 years ($n=1008$) was assessed in Kenya. Weight, height, and waist and hip circumferences were measured. A 24-hour dietary recall was conducted with each participant. This data was compared with data of the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) of women in South Africa ($n=4481$). Dietary intake of South African women was based on secondary data analysis of dietary studies using the 24-hour recall method ($n=1726$). In South Africa, 27.4% women had a BMI ≥ 30 kg/m² compared with 14.2% of Kenyan women. In both countries there were large urban-rural differences in BMI, with the highest prevalence in women in urban areas. BMI increased with age, as did abdominal obesity which was equally prolific in both countries with more than 45% of women in the older groups having a waist/hip ratio ≥ 0.85 . The nutrient mean adequacy ratio (MAR) of the South African rural diet was lower than those of the Kenyans diet (55.9; 57.3%, respectively). Dietary diversity score (DDS) and food variety score (FVS) were significantly lower in South African rural women (3.3; 4.9) compared with Kenyans (4.5; 6.8). Urban-rural differences in diet and weight status indicates that the nutrition transition was similar in both countries despite large sociodemographic differences; however, rural Kenyan women had a better MAR, DDS, and FVS than South African women, most probably due to 60% having access to land