HEALTH STATUS OF OLDER ADULTS RECEIVING AMBULATORY HEALTH CARE AT CAÑAZAS HOSPITAL, PROVINCE OF VERAGUAS, PANAMA

L. Cornejo 1, L. Cornejo, C. Garcia 3, O. Bermudez 2, L. Cornejo

1Public Health, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Institute, USA 
2Public Health, Tufts University, USA 
3School of Medicine, University of Panama, Panama

Background: Limited information exists about metabolic conditions among indigenous people of Panama. The aim of this study was to assess the prevalence of metabolic syndrome and to examine the association of this condition with obesity, health behaviors, among a sample of 50 inhabitants from Cañazas, to provide information about the prevalence of metabolic syndrome. Methods: Adults over the age of 50 attending at Cañazas Hospital participate in a health screening focused on the risk factors for metabolic syndrome. Data was collected from anthropometry, blood pressure, fasting glucose, and self-reported responses about age, sex, and smoking. The association between metabolic syndrome, obesity, and self-reported health behaviors were explored. Results: For 58 subjects, the proportion of individuals with metabolic syndrome totaled 69.0%. Prevalence of each risk factor was the following: 67.2% elevated waist circumference, 72.4% high blood pressure or on treatment for hypertension, 69% low LDL, 51.7% elevated triglycerides, 46.6% elevated fasting blood glucose or previous diagnosis of type II diabetes. 96.6% of the sample had at least one metabolic syndrome risk factor. About half of test subjects were of unhealthy BMI (1.7% underweight, 41.4% overweight and 6.9% obese). We found statistically significant associations between metabolic syndrome and age, sex, BMI, and marital status. Conclusions: Prevalence of metabolic syndrome was found to be high across the sample population, with 96.6% having at least one risk factor.