

Self-reported Knowledge of School Students and their Teachers - Risks and Prevention of Coronary Heart Disease

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Objective: To determine self-reported knowledge of school students and their teachers of risk factors and prevention of coronary heart disease (CHD).

Methods: Third grade intermediate and all three grades of secondary school male and female students in Al Khobar area were selected. Multistage stratified sampling design was adopted. A total of 2571 students was selected comprising 1240 males and 1331 females. All teachers in the selected schools were included (142 males and 210 females). Two sets of self-administered questionnaires were used: one for male students and their teachers and one for female students and their teachers.

Results: Male and female teachers had significantly better knowledge of CHD risk factors than their students (except for smoking). However, knowledge of both male students and their teachers about causes of CHD (except for smoking) was unsatisfactory (<30% for students verses <55% for teachers). Knowledge of both male students and their teachers about diabetes mellitus as a risk factor was very poor (12% for students verses 18% for teachers). Female teachers had significantly better knowledge about CHD risk factors than their students. The majority of male students and their teachers considered abstinence from smoking and practice of physical exercise as the main preventive measures for CHD. Self-reported knowledge of female students and their teachers about preventive measure for CHD followed the same pattern as for the males. The main sources of knowledge about health and disease as reported by male and female students were television (58% males verses 61% females) and magazines (31% males verses 39% females). Primary health care centers were the least source of knowledge (17% by males and 16% by females).

Conclusion: The study findings point to some problems in the health knowledge and life-style pattern of school students as well as teachers, which calls for a competent system of health education to be directed to this important target group in the society. It is recommended that health promotion and disease prevention concepts and strategies be included as part of the school curriculum.

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