Risk Factors to Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in the Philippines

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INTRODUCTION

For the past decades, prevalence rates of major risk factors to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the Philippines continue to rise and are now the leading causes of death in the country. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), NCDs account for 67% of total deaths that occurred in 2012, and nearly 35% of the global burden of disease has its origin in adolescence.

This study on the assessment of selected risk factors to NCDs among adolescents, 10 to 17 years old and adults, 18 years old and above, was conducted as a component of the 8th National Nutrition Survey (NNS) in 2013.

With the launch of the WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2013-2020, the Department of Science Technology-Food and Nutrition Research Institute has provided data to help track the prevalence of selected NCD risk factors in the Philippines.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The 8th NNS employed a multi-stage stratified random sampling design and covered all 17 regions of the Philippines. It was a household-based survey and used a de jure approach in enumerating individuals or survey respondents.

Data from all adults, 18 years old and over, and adolescents, 10 to 17 years old, were analyzed using Stata version 12.0.

Data on blood pressure, obesity, smoking, and alcohol drinking were analyzed among adolescents and adults while data on blood glucose, lipid profile, physical activity, and unhealthy diet were analyzed among adults. Urinary sodium excretion were analyzed only among adults in the National Capital Region.
RESULTS

Adolescents, 10 to 17 years old, have a mean blood pressure of 97.6/63.6 mmHg.

Adults, 18 years old and over, have a mean blood pressure of 119.1/77.0 mmHg.

2.4% of adolescents, 10 to 17 years old were obese.

12.9% of adolescents, 10 to 17 years old were current drinkers.

56.2% of currently drinking adults were binge drinking.

4.3% of adolescents, 10 to 17 years old were current smokers.

Adults in NCR had a mean urinary sodium excretion of 123.63 mmol/L.

Overweight/Obesity

High Triglyceride

High Total Cholesterol

High FBG

Elevated BP

Figure I. Prevalence of metabolic risk factors to non-communicable diseases among adults, 18 years old and over, by sex: Philippines, 2013.
RESULTS

Figure II. Prevalence of some behavioral risk factors to non-communicable diseases among adults, 18 years old and over, by sex: Philippines, 2013

CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATION

Results of this study showed that NCD risk factors were present among Filipino adolescents and the prevalence was higher among adults. Preventive measures to reduce the prevalence of NCD risk factors are urgently needed and should not only focus among older population. Preventing NCDs at an early age may benefit not just the adolescents of today but also their future adult lives.

The government should invest in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of implemented programs and assess if these initiatives are reaching the targeted population groups. Lifestyle change-focused programs and policies concerning alcohol consumption, unhealthy diet and sedentary lifestyle need to be given more emphasis.

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