



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Experiences of Health Related Lifestyles in High Body Fat but Non-obese Female College Students in Korea

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Abstract

Objectives: The purpose of this study was to describe and understand the lifestyles of non-obese female college students with high body fat (HBF).

Methods: The interview data were collected from 18 female students [body mass index (BMI) <23 kg/m² and body fat ratio ≥30%] and analyzed by using descriptive phenomenology of Colaizzi. The procedural steps described the phenomenon of interest, collected participants' descriptions of the phenomenon, extracted the meaning of significant statements, organized the meanings into clusters, wrote exhaustive descriptions and then incorporated data into an exhaustive description.

Results: The results in 153 restatements, 36 constructed meanings, 22 themes, seven theme clusters, and three categories were deduced. The three categories were: diminished daily concerns of health, changes in living habits by stressors, and perceived unbalance in health.

Conclusion: This study describes non-obese female university students' experiences with HBF and their lifestyles. The findings have important implications for health promotion for non-obese female university students with HBF and must be considered when developing education courses for preparing adults.

1. Introduction

The issues of 'health and well-being' have been common concerns for all generations and times. Especially, in modern society, these concerns are related to controlling lifestyle and life satisfaction as a concept of well-being [1]. Therefore, well-being is subjective with

regards to satisfaction with life and advanced level of health needs in modern society.

Moreover, well-being considers integrative health promotion that includes physical and psychological aspects of nursing care [2]. Generally, people realize the importance of health and its values in middle age and have had experiences of health-related problems. For college students, the concerns are appearance rather than

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health. Youths in their college years are sensitive to the latest fashion and try to pursue new ideas. However, the formation of healthy habits would be a good foundation for health and well-being in later years and could lead to a healthy lifespan. Therefore, for youths in their college years, health management must be appealing.

Generally, as we grew older, the ratio of muscle gradually decreases but fat increases. However, in modern society, all for ages it appears that the range of body weight is normal, but the fat ratio is related with activities [3]. Especially when studying and preparing for jobs, college students are more likely to have decreased activities and an increased ratio of body fats. Female college students concerned about looks tend to decrease their weight by food, not by exercise [4]. These tendencies of inactivity in female students can add to body fat.

Romaguera et al [5] reported that physical activity was positively related to eating fruits and vegetables and negatively related to smoking tobacco. Also, Brandao et al [6] reported that female college students tend to be more inactive in the upper grade. Morrell et al [7] identified that the levels of diet and activity were related to the risk of metabolic syndrome. These results revealed that physical activity and diet are related and that activity was a more important variable for health. Therefore, female college students, like adults, are considered to have the same risk factors for health by an inactive lifestyle.

Korean literature includes studies on activities for health promotion [8,9], body weight and satisfaction [10], subjective perception of body image and body mass index [11], and body mass index and activity for health promotion [12]. These studies measured variables by quantitative methods.

However, the Korean domestic national index of health shows that women in their twenties who smoked tobacco had increasing and decreasing practices of healthy activity [13]. Considering the sequence of health care, the impact on lifespan is greatest for women in their twenties. So, female college students with a high body fat (HBF) ratio must be studied. Also, an in-depth meaning of their experiences on lifestyle should be studied for the development of interventions for health promotion.

This paper focuses on non-obese female college students with HBF. The aim of the paper is to describe experiences in lifestyle from their perspective.

2. Methods

2.1. Design

A qualitative exploratory design, Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenology approach was used for this study [14]. Colaizzi's method has been used for identifying common characteristics in participants. Therefore, this method is appropriate for extracting the meaning of common experiences in non-obese female college students with HBF.

2.2. Participants

To measure fatness, the body mass index (BMI) proposed by the World Health Organization was determined [15]. The participants were female college students, aged 21–24 years, with a BMI in the range of 18.5 to 22.9 (mean 21.00 ± 1.70), but a fat ratio $>30\%$ (mean 31.07 ± 1.04). They consisted of college juniors or seniors.

2.3. Procedure

For data collection, the purpose and contents of this paper were explained, informed consents were received, and selective samplings were done. The sample group in this paper had normal body weight but had an excessive fat ratio.

The interview was conducted in person by a researcher. The focus of the interview was to determine the participant's experiences. The researchers put aside any biased views and used the method of 'suspension of judgment' and 'square bracket.' They tried to maintain an objective position with regards to the meaning of the participants' experiences.

Due to the rigor of assessment standards [16], the results of this paper ensure confidence and validity. The criteria of rigor were truth, appliance, consistency, and neutrality. There is no additional new data on this study. To obtain neutrality in this study, first analysis data were reanalyzed and reflected on. In addition, the paper was reviewed by a professor with experiences in qualitative research and participants. Through these processes, the results were consistent with regards to experiences.

Interviews started with open questions relating to lifestyle and health. Then, according to the participants' responses, questions were asked such as, a following question, close question, direct question, indirect question, structural question, and silence and interpretative question [17].

The interviews took place from January 2011 to March 2011. The mean duration of interviews was about 40–70 minutes. The interviews were performed about twice with each participant. The contents of the interview were recorded with the participants' consent. Then, the recorded data were transcribed through personal repeated listening. The meanings were then identified.

2.4. Ethical issue

This study received institution ethics approval from the university committee (No: PKNU-201104). Information on the study was placed on a student notice board to recruit participants. Students who were interested were given a brief verbal explanation of the research. They were then given a copy of the consent form, informed that their interviews would be recorded, and asked to return the consent form if they wanted to participate. They were also told of the voluntary nature of their participation and their right

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