

OBESITY IN SHIFT WORKING NURSES:

Is there a higher prevalence of obesity in nurses working shift work than nurses working traditional nine to five hours?

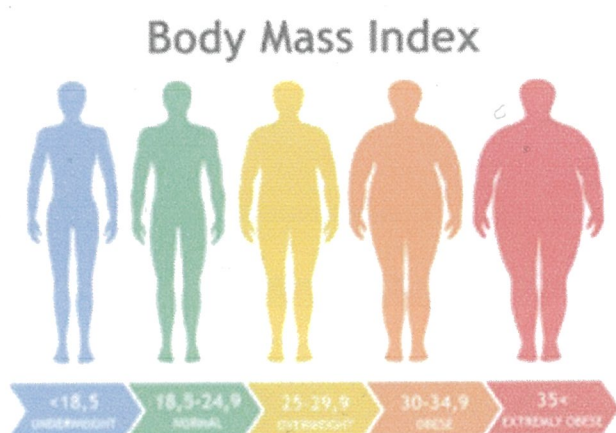
INTRODUCTION

Obesity can be defined as abnormal or exorbitant fat accumulation and is classified by a BMI of 30 or higher and can be a major health risk for many chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and hypertension to name a few (World Health Organisation, 2018). Determinants of an unhealthy weight can include but is

not limited to; unhealthy diet high in fats and sugars, a lack of physical exercise and irregular and inefficient sleep

(Ministry of Health, 2017).

Promoting a healthy, balanced lifestyle is a crucial part of a nurse's role, however nurses' working shift work experience a lack of regular and efficient sleep which can influence their exercise and eating dietary habits hence leading to obesity.



(Downing, 2018)

LITERATURE REVIEW

From the literature review I have conducted I have found research suggesting that nurses working shift work rather than traditional hours are more likely to be obese. This is most likely due to changes in their sleep, stress, eating and exercise habits that nurses working traditional nine to five hours aren't experiencing to the same extent (Turner & Zhao, 2008).

The disruption of nurses daily routines can consequently result in an unhealthy diet compromising of high energy dense foods that are high in fat and simple sugars and lacking nutrients and vitamins (Craft & Gordon, 2015). Sleep patterns are also interrupted due to working shift work, poor sleep contributes to obesity as changes in circadian rhythm affects the metabolism of food and nutrients in the body (Atkinson, Fullick, Grindey, Maclaren & Waterhouse, 2008; Owens, 2017).

Nurses are exposed to a variety of scenarios with many of these putting large amounts of stress and pressure on the staff. Weight gain can be seen in stressed individuals due to a change in eating patterns and a higher level of cortisol present. Cortisol is a steroid hormone produced by the adrenal glands which can lead to fluid retention and weight gain (Harris, Nagy & Vardaxis, 2014).

RECOMMENDATIONS

I have developed two recommendations to address the high prevalence of obesity in nurses working shift work, both involving health promotion as the key approach in both. These recommendations are;

- Providing health education and promotion around resting and recovering post shift.
- Encourage physical activity for nurses outside of the work place.

My rationale for these recommendations are that nurses work in a high stress and physically demanding job environment, which can influence how they spend their leisure time. Promoting a healthy balance where nurses have ways to rest and destress after shift, as well as incorporating a good amount of physical activity means nurses are at a lesser risk of health complications, and workplace injuries due to lower weight.

CONCLUSION

Obesity is an ongoing health issue in New Zealand's population of which nurses and health professionals are trying to address. However, literature suggests there is a higher prevalence of obesity in nurses who work shift work. This presentation has outlined some of the contributing factors to shift working nurses experiencing weight gain, and some possible interventions and strategies to improve awareness and the health of shift working nurses.

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Presentation Rationale:

An academic poster is used to convey an intended message in a visual display. Although limited information can be displayed on a poster, it can be used to spark further interest and discussion in the subject (Ilic & Rowe, 2009). I have decided to use a poster to display my presentation as it is largely self-explanatory and introduces the topic to an audience but can further be discussed at a more in-depth level with interested individuals. My poster allows the health issue of obesity to be discussed in relation to how it can be experienced by nurses working shift work, as well as recommendations on how to approach this health issue. Obesity is a large catalyst to other health complications such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and hypertension which all place a large burden on our health system (Craft & Gordon, 2015). Nurses are advocates and driving forces in the health of our population, therefore the health of our nurses is crucial.

PECOT:

PECOT category:	Information relating to question:	Explanation:
Population	Registered nurses who work shift work hours.	Shift work is defined as working a shift that takes place outside of traditional nine to five hours (Harris, Nagy & Vardaxis, 2014).
Exposure/ intervention	Nurses that work shift work and are classified as obese.	Obesity being defined as having a body mass index of over 30 (World Health Organisation, 2018).
Comparison	Nurses working shift work versus nurses not working shift work (traditional nine to five hours).	To see whether obesity is more prevalent in nurses working shift work rather than traditional hours.
Outcome	To see whether there is a correlation between nurses working shift work and obesity.	To be able to address why it is a health issue and look at possible solutions for this.
Time	Time is not relevant in this situation.	Time is not relevant in this situation.

References:

Craft, J. A., & Gordon, C. J. (2015). *Understanding pathophysiology* (2nd ed.). Australia: Mosby Elsevier.

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