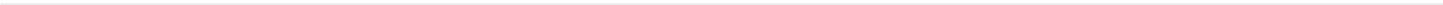




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Differences in Health-Related Behaviors and Body Mass Index Risk Categories in African American Women in College

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Abstract

Objective

To determine if differences in health-related behaviors (diet and physical activity) exist in African American college women based on body mass index (BMI) risk categories.

Methods

One hundred eighty-six African American women (age, 19.5 ± 2.5 y) in college were surveyed using the modified National College Health Risk Behavior Survey. Data regarding demographics, weight loss history/methods, food choices, and physical activity frequency were compared for obese (BMI > 30, n = 30), overweight (25 < BMI < 30, n = 45), and normal-weight (BMI < 25, n = 111) groups. Data were analyzed using multiple 2-way analyses of variance.

Results

No differences in food choices were determined between the groups. The overweight and obese groups were more likely than the normal-weight group to have used healthy modalities such as diet and/or exercise to try to lose weight instead of unhealthy methods such as laxatives and diet pills. The overweight group reported more vigorous aerobic training and strength training workouts than the normal-weight group.

Conclusions

Food selection and activity frequency are not enough to differentiate African American women in different BMI categories. Other factors may contribute to obesity such as food portion sizes, genetics, and/or intensity of physical activities.



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Keywords

obesity; body weight; African Americans; women's health; exercise; health behaviors

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