



The Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition

ICDDR,B
ISSN: 1606-0997
EISSN: 2072-1315
Vol. 37, No. 1, 2018, pp. 1

BIOLINE CODE: HN18010
FULL PAPER LANGUAGE: ENGLISH
DOCUMENT TYPE: RESEARCH ARTICLE
DOCUMENT AVAILABLE FREE OF CHARGE

The Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition, Vol. 37, No. 1, 2018, pp. 1

en Water intake among Ghanaian youth aged 15–34 years: quantitative and qualitative evidence
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ABSTRACT

Background: The prevalence of obesity is on the increase in Ghana, and the intake of sugar-sweetened beverages may be a determinant. The aim of this study is to use quantitative and qualitative data to investigate water intake among Ghanaian youth 15–34 years old.

Methods: The 2008 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey data is used to investigate the effects of socio-demographic factors on water intake behaviours of a sample of 2771 male and 2806 female youth aged 15–34 years old in Ghana. Additionally, data from focus group discussions are used to examine perceptions with regard to water intake. In terms of the analysis, the quantitative bit of the data utilised Stata software and the qualitative data used the Atlas Ti software. Percentages, means, standard deviations, *t* test, one-way ANOVA, Tukey's post hoc test and Poisson regression were used for the quantitative analysis while the qualitative data was analysed thematically.

Results: Quantitative results found that age (IRR = 1.112, 95% CI 1.070–1.156) and region of residence (IRR = 0.855, 95% CI 0.780–0.937; IRR = 0.910, 95% CI 0.834–0.993) were important predictors of water intake in males, while age (IRR = 1.103, 95% CI 1.054–1.153), region of residence (IRR = 0.907, 95% CI 0.844–0.975; IRR = 1.258, 95% CI 1.130–1.400), ethnicity (IRR = 0.919, 95% CI 0.834–1.013) and marital status (IRR = 1.051, 95% CI 0.999–1.106) were found to be important predictors of water intake among females. From the focus group discussion, accessibility and physiological factors were mentioned as issues hampering adequate water intake.

Conclusion: The similarities and differences between males and females should sensitise policy makers to the need for more gender-specific interventions to encourage water intake for the purposes of preventing non-communicable diseases. Moreover, intervention(s) to promote water intake should address issues of accessibility, physiological factors, weather and weight management.

KEYWORDS

Quantitative; Qualitative; Youth; Water intake; Ghana

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