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A review of a holistic health intervention for improving the health status of obese national service recruits

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A systematic analysis of global obesity estimated the UAE's obesity prevalence at 12.2% for males less than 20 years of age and 27.1% for males aged 20 years and above. More recently, evidence has suggested that obesity rates of school children in the UAE are also rising at an alarming rate and that these increases are likely to continue into early adulthood. Given these trends and considering that national service is compulsory, it is not surprising that up to 30.0% of males enrolling into their military service are considered obese. In attempts to reduce this figure and to provide holistic support to these individuals, national service implemented health centers that aid the streamlining of recruits into tailored programs that include specific dietary, physical training and educational elements. National service recruits (age: 22.4±4.4 years, n=5749) with a Body Mass Index (BMI)>30.0 kgm² had their anthropometry measures taken at the beginning and end of initial training. Over the course of a 15 week period significant changes were noted for their body mass (T1=110.7±17.7, T2=94.2±15.19 kg; t=222.1, P<.001), BMI (T1=37.3±5.3, T2=37.8±4.6 kgm²; t=230.3, P<.001) and waist-to-height ratio (T1=0.66±0.07, T2=0.57±0.77 waist (cm)/height (cm)) t=131.8, P<.001).

Biography

Deborah Allen has been working as the Head of Dietetics for the UAE Armed Forces within the Physical Readiness Department since 2008 and is currently heading the Nutrition and Dietetic program for the UAE Armed Forces National Service. She has completed her Bachelor's degree in Sport Science and Biology and Master's degree in Human Nutrition and a PG Diploma in Dietetics. She has worked for renowned academic institutions including Deakin University, Australia and Trinity College, Dublin where she has been involved in a number of international research projects.

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