
Eating habits, health status and health behaviour of young Austrian men aged 17 to 20 in context to their lifestyles

Leitner G. ^{a, b}, Rust P. ^a, Elmadfa I. ^a

^a University of Vienna, Department of Nutritional Sciences, Vienna, AUSTRIA

^b St. Poelten University of Applied Sciences, Department of Health & Social Sciences, St. Poelten, AUSTRIA

1 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Most studies about men's health focus on adults aged 50 years and older. But it is largely unknown whether and to what extent health behaviour in young men represents risk factors for the incidence of lifestyle-related diseases in later life.[1].

2 METHODS

Within this cross-sectional study 1369 men, aged 17 to 20 years, in Lower Austria, were anthropometrically investigated and interviewed about their lifestyle (nutrition, health-related behaviour and physical activity) at their investigation on the suitability of the Austrian Armed Forces.

- The assessment of nutritional behavior was carried out by FFQ.
- The physical activity was measured by IPAQ 2005 [2]
- The lifestyle was determined by indicators having a negative impact on health like diet, smoking, alcohol, physical activity and BMI [3.4]
- The health status was determined on the basis of nutrition-related biochemical parameters (sub sample 2011) and was compared with those of men investigated ten years ago (sub sample 2001).

3 RESULTS

The evaluation shows that especially the **anthropometric data** (body weight and height, waist circumference), **the frequency of cardiovascular risk factors** like high body mass index and blood pressure, as well as incidence of high levels of uric acid and liver function parameters **increased significantly** in the time period of one decade. However, blood cholesterol and blood glucose decreased significantly, while triglycerides showed a stable status.

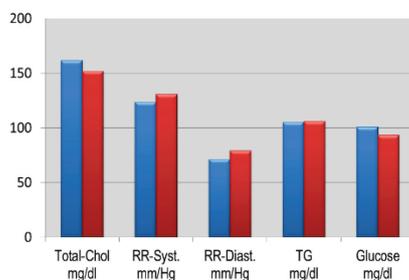


Figure 1. Differences in biochemical parameters evaluated in 2001 and 2011
Additionally life style-related characteristics

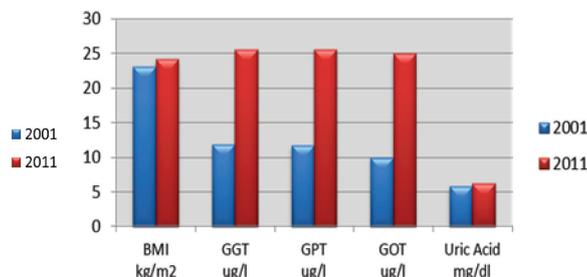


Figure 2. Differences in biochemical parameters evaluated in 2001 and 2011

(nutritional habits, physical activity, alcohol consumption and smoking habits) show **unhealthy attributes** in the investigation group of 2011:

Although the effects of an unhealthy lifestyle is still not measurable but the results show that there are already individual predictors influencing health status in early adulthood:

- increased alcohol consumption leads to significantly higher total cholesterol values
- Smoking is associated with increased BMI and Waist circumference
- Poor diet correlates with a higher Waist circumference
- Physical activity lowers blood pressure
- Lifestyle and health behavior are significantly influenced by socioeconomic status

4 CONCLUSIO

Data show that quite a number of health-detrimental factors significantly increased within the investigation group of young men in the last ten years. Therefore, target-group-specific campaigns are urgently necessary to promote and continually support a health-conscious life style.

REFERENCES

- [1] BARDEHLE D, STIEHLER M (2010). Erster Deutscher Männergesundheitsbericht. Ein Pilotprojekt. Zuckschwerdt Verlag, München.
- [2] CRAIG CL, MARSHALL AL, SJÖSTRÖM M, BAUMAN AE, BOOTH ML, AINSWORTH BE, PRATT M, EKELUND U, YNGYE A, SALLIS JF, OIJA P (2003). International physical activity questionnaire: 12-country reliability and validity. *Med Sci Sports Exerc*; 35(8):1381-1395.
- [3] FORD ES, BERGMANN MM, KROGER, SCHIENKIEWITZ A, WEIKERT C, BOEING H (2009). Healthy living is the best revenge: findings from the European Prospective Investigation Into Cancer and Nutrition-Potsdam study. *Arch Intern Med*; 169: 1355–1362.
- [4] LEYK D, RÜTHER T, WITZKI A, SIEVERT A, MOEDL A, BLETTNER M, HACKFORT D, LÖLLGEN H (2012). Physical Fitness, Weight, Smoking and Exercise Patterns in Young Adults. *Dtsch Arztebl Int*; 109(44): 737-74