Clinical Capsules

Predicting Diet Adherence

Obese women who lost more weight in the first 2 weeks of a meal-replacement diet program were more likely to continue the program and maintain their weight loss, reported I. Packianathan of Addenbrooke's Hospital National Health Service Trust, Cambridge, England, and associates.

Phase 1 of the trial lasted 16 weeks and consisted of a 900-calorie/day diet, which included two meal replacements; 114 (76%) of the 150 women completed this phase. Weight loss during the first 2 weeks predicted adherence during phase 1 (*P* less than .001), and the mean weight loss of women who completed phase 1 was 8.9 kg. Only systolic blood pressure was associated with weight loss at week 16; higher blood pressure was linked to greater weight loss (Diabetes Obes. Metab. 2005;7:439-47).

Seventy participants achieved the target weight loss of at least 9% of initial weight, and 46 of them completed phase 2, which lasted 12 months. Maintaining weight loss by not gaining more than 3% of their weight at the start of phase 2 was predicted by cholesterol and triglyceride levels; higher cholesterol and lower triglycerides were linked to lower risk of regaining weight, the investigators said.

Abdominal Diameter Index

Abdominal diameter index may be the anthropometric measure of choice to gauge prevalent coronary heart disease risk in men, reported Donald A. Smith, M.D., of Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York, and his associates.

Prevalent coronary heart disease (CHD) was found in 29 of 466 middle-aged men (mean age 45 years). The investigators assessed body mass index (BMI); waist, hip, and thigh circumferences; waist-hip ratio; waist-thigh ratio; sagittal abdominal diameter; and abdominal diameter index. They found that abdominal diameter index had the largest and most significant standardized odds ratio (1.80) for prevalent CHD, which was equivalent to 10-year Framingham CHD risk. The latter is the 10-year probability of developing CHD based on the Framingham algorithm (Diabetes Obes. Metab. 2005;7:370-80).

Subjects in the highest third for abdominal diameter index had a univariate odds ratio of 5.47 for CHD, compared with those in the lowest third of the index, which suggests that abdominal diameter index is the only anthropometric measure that adds information "beyond that provided by a 10-year Framingham risk score," the authors said.

Obese Men Getting PSA Test

Overweight and obese men aged 50 years and older in the United States were significantly more likely to have had a prostate-specific antigen test than men of healthy weight, reported Kevin Fontaine, Ph.D., of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, and his associates.

In an observational study based on the self-reported 2001 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, the median age of the 30,871 subjects was 61 years; nearly 76% reported having had a screening PSA test within the past year (Public Health 2005;119:694-8).

Men who were overweight (BMI of 25-29 kg/m^2) were significantly more likely than healthy-weight men to have been tested for PSA within the past year (odds ratio [OR] 1.13). The pattern held for obese men who had a BMI of 30-34 (OR 1.26), a BMI of 35-39 (OR 1.14), and a BMI of 40 or higher (OR 1.04), compared with healthy-weight men.

Other factors associated with PSA testing were having health insurance (OR = 1.73), a high school education or more (OR = 1.35), and an income of at least $25,000 (OR = 1.25).

Parents of Sick Children

Parents of children who were recently diagnosed with cancer report significant psychological distress and weight gain, compared with parents of healthy children, reported A.W. Smith of the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute and associates.

In a longitudinal, case-control study, 49 parents of healthy children and 49 parents of cancer patients were evaluated for weight gain and psychological distress within 2 weeks of their child's diagnosis and again 3 months later (Int. J. Obes. Relat. Metab. Disord. 2005;29:244-50).

Among parents of cancer patients, 63% gained weight (mean change, 1.76 kg) over the 3-month study, compared with 31% of controls (mean change, 0.16 kg) who gained weight.

Weight change among parents of cancer patients was strongly associated with the impact of caregiving for a sick child and the severity of life events at baseline, the investigators said.

Parents of cancer patients reported far less physical activity than controls, at 400-500 kcal/wk vs. 1,400-1,500 kcal/wk, respectively, and reported consuming fewer calories than control parents; the latter finding was unexpected.

—Kevin Foley