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The Health Benefits of Intermittent Fasting

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The Health Benefits of Intermittent Fasting

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BACKGROUND

The significance of enhancing the body of knowledge of intermittent fasting can be reflected in our nation's growing epidemic of obesity. In 2008, the estimated annual medical cost of obesity in the U.S. was nearly \$150 billion. One intervention that is gaining popularity is intermittent fasting. Intermittent fasting is an umbrella term for various dietary protocols that cycles between periods of fasting and non-fasting as a means for achieving weight loss.

PURPOSE

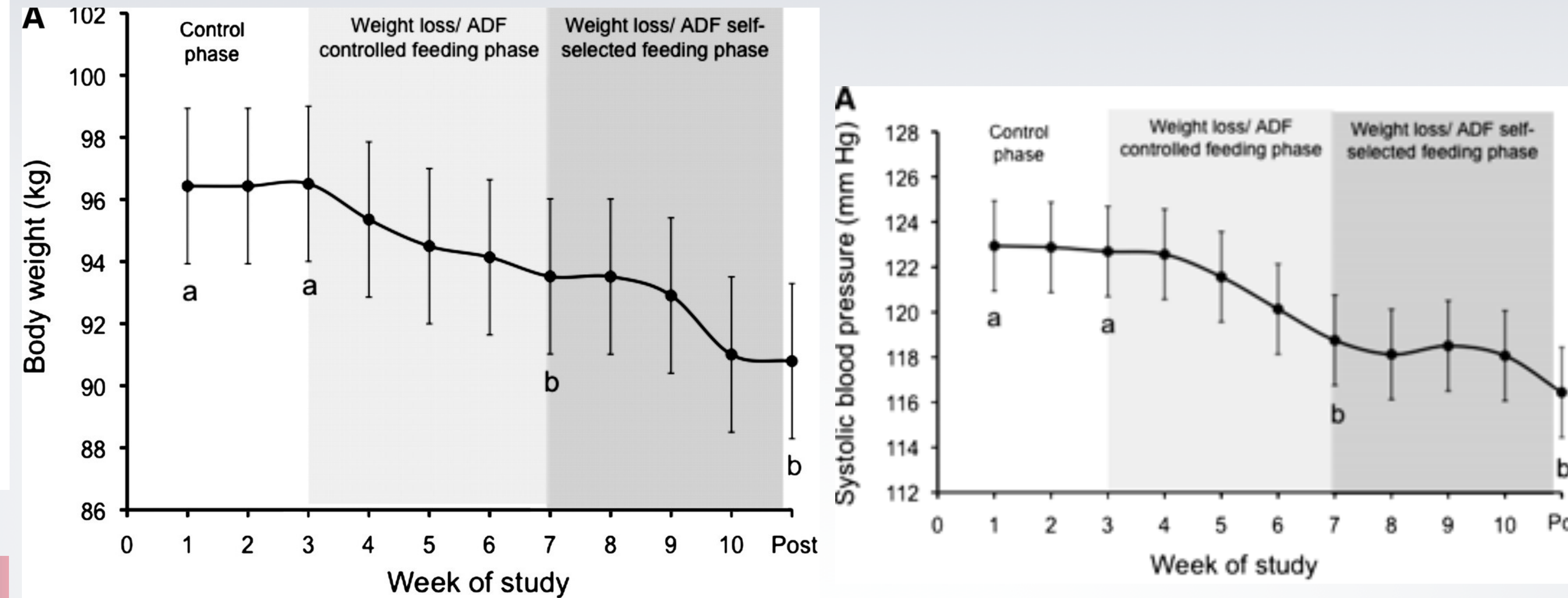
- Expand on the knowledge of intermittent fasting protocols
- Determine the relative efficacy of these dietary fasting methods.
- Determine if these dietary protocols are safe and if they cause any serious adverse effects

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What effect do intermittent fasting protocols have on the body?
2. What are some of the adverse effects of such dietary protocols?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

- Data bases searched include, CINHALL, PubMed, ProQuest, and PsychINFO.
- Search terms: intermittent fasting, alternate day fasting, obesity management, intermittent energy restriction, health benefits AND intermittent fasting.
- The Health Belief Model designed by Hochbaum, Rosenstock, & Kegel guided the literature review as a theoretical framework.



RESULTS

Weight Loss

- All selected clinical trials implemented some form of intermittent fasting and achieved weight loss among all subjects
- Greatest weight loss was achieved via an 8-week Alternate Day Fasting protocol. Mean weight loss among subjects was 8% (8.5kg) of baseline weight.

Cholesterol

- Reduction in total and LDL cholesterol was observed. One study saw a decrease of 19% & 20% in total and LDL cholesterol respectively. Protocol: IFCR-L

CHD Risk Factors

- All selected studies saw a decrease in systolic blood pressure. One clinical trial saw an average decrease of SBP from 124 +/- 5 to 116 +/- 3 mmHg.
- Decrease in fasting insulin and insulin resistance; Mean difference in fasting insulin: -1.2 μU/ml (-16%); Mean difference in insulin resistance: -1.2 μU/mmol/L (-45%)

Adverse Effects

- No major adverse effects were reported by any of the subjects and IF protocols were generally well tolerated. Minor adverse physical symptoms were reported such as lack of energy, headaches, and constipation

Limitations

- Clinical trials conducted were relatively short-term, ranging from 8-24 week interventions. Further research is needed to evaluate long-term effects of intermittent fasting.
- The majority of research conducted focuses on the obese population. Further research should focus on intermittent fasting and subjects with normal BMIs.
- Higher degree of meal control. Only 1 of the 5 selected clinical trials provided energy calculated meals. Other trials relied heavily on self reported food diaries.

CONCLUSIONS

- Intermittent fasting protocols may be an effective intervention for short-term obesity treatment.
- Patients with type II diabetes may also benefit from the effects of intermittent fasting diets with improved insulin sensitivity, lower fasting glucose, and decrease fasting insulin.
- In the short-term, intermittent fasting is safe, well tolerated, and poses no serious adverse effects.
- Intermittent fasting may lower CHD risk factors.

NURSING IMPLICATIONS

- New insight regarding obesity/weight loss intervention that is gaining in popularity
- By implementing such interventions, we can help the nations growing epidemic of obesity = lower health care cost
- Nurses have play large role in patient education; more tools and alternative options for our patients