



## Importance of health education for the prevention of cardiovascular diseases in obese individuals: an integrative review

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### Introduction

Overweight is one of the most challenging and incident public health problems of the 21st century, accounting for about 5% of deaths worldwide, mainly due to cardiovascular disease (CVD) and its complications [1,2]. Currently, around 40% of the world population is overweight, and this indicator has tripled in the last 40 years [3]. Obesity significantly contributes to the onset of heart disease, due to the accumulation of fatty plaques in the artery walls, reducing their caliber and making blood flow to the heart difficult, as well as to the development of other comorbidities, including Diabetes Mellitus (DM) and Stroke cerebral [4,5].

Most of the health problems resulting from obesity can be prevented through behavioral approaches, such as combating sedentary lifestyles, stress, smoking cessation and reducing alcohol abuse. Thus, the focus of prevention must be based on modifiable environmental factors [6]. It is noteworthy that it is essential to implement strategies aimed at reeducating habits and customs that are harmful to health, which increase the chances of developing numerous cardiovascular diseases associated with obesity. In addition, it is essential to promote debate and teaching actions about the practice of physical activities and the adoption of healthy eating habits, in order to avoid irreversible damage to health.

Therefore, this study aimed to highlight the importance of health education for the prevention of cardiovascular diseases in obese individuals.

### Methods

This is an integrative literature review, with a descriptive character, carried out through searches in the Virtual Health Library (VHL), in the MEDLINE, LILACS, BDNF and CUMED databases. The keywords registered in the Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) used were: “Cardiovascular Diseases”, “Cardiopathies”, “Health Education”, “Overweight” and “Obesity”. For its realization, the 6 distinct and sequential steps proposed in the scientific literature were followed, including: 1) definition of the theme and research question; 2) delimitation of inclusion and exclusion criteria; 3) limited information from selected studies; 4) analysis of articles included in the review; 5) interpretation of results and 6) presentation of the review [7].

As a research question, what is the importance of health education for the prevention of cardiovascular diseases in obese individuals? Inclusion criteria were articles available for free in full, written in Portuguese, English and Spanish, published from January 2016 to August 2021, studies that presented clarity and consolidation of data and that corresponded to the proposed objective. While the exclusion criteria used were incomplete studies, with no connection to the theme, review works, theses, which did not meet the chosen timeline, and duplicates.

After collecting the data, 14,514 articles were found, subsequently, with the application of the defined inclusion and exclusion criteria, this number was reduced to 2,266 studies. After reading the titles and abstracts, 21 articles were selected, including nine

productions in the final qualitative synthesis for the construction of this work after reading it in full.

## Results and Discussion

The dissemination of information about the importance and need to prevent cardiovascular disease in overweight people, in addition to being a process that does not require sophisticated technology, only control, lifestyle changes, self-knowledge and self-management of the body and health, yet is one of the most effective measures, as it is able to raise awareness about their behavior mediated by beliefs, culture, habits and individual and collective knowledge that mediate decision-making, making them one of the most responsible for compromising their health and well-being [8,9].

Among the health promotion and prevention actions, educational interventions stand out, which encourage adherence to treatment and rehabilitation, as well as encourage users to actively take care of their health. Thus, it can be seen how much health education can effectively contribute to improving the quality of life, with this practice, individuals acquire characteristics that determine their health status, developing practices that favor and intensify self-care [10,11].

Health education is essential to prevent comorbidities resulting from obesity and offer a good quality of life, since it must be implemented with the in order to offer resources for the realization of self-care and guide obese people during the process of prevention or continued treatment of diseases associated with overweight. Furthermore, for the education process, practices must see the user from a biological, cultural, social and political perspective, as well as being associated with their family context, the environment and the society to which they are inserted. These actions are intertwined as an element that promotes collective knowledge, which transposes autonomy and independence to the individual to take care of themselves [12,13].

Health professionals have the role of providing assistance and guiding individuals in order to make them aware, however the protagonist in the process of fighting the disease will always be the patient, being responsible for their quality of life, health and well-being. Therefore, the importance of health education is highlighted as a tool for health promotion, for the continuity of treatment, in the sharing of information and experiences, aiming to improve the health condition of this group [14,15].

Health education and health promotion are concepts that go hand in hand, both use processes that seek the participation of the entire community in the

context of their daily lives, not only targeting people who are sick or at risk of becoming ill. In addition, actions pertaining to health education must be intentionally developed, seeking to integrate behavioral factors with learning during other experiences and educational interventions in order to contribute to voluntary actions, and consequently to the health process. In this way, we understand that these educational actions are systematically planned activities. This planning must contain steps that include the target audience of the actions, interested in a healthy life, with behavioral and habits changes [16].

## Conclusion

Based on the detailed analysis of the sample results, it was evident that obesity represents a serious public health problem, as it predisposes to the emergence of various comorbidities, not only cardiovascular diseases, in addition to interfering with the functioning of the body as a whole. The need to develop strategies aimed at education and change in the lifestyle of patients who have this comorbidity is highlighted, as it enhances the emergence of chronic and acute heart diseases that can later develop into severe clinical outcomes and in some cases irreversible. Thus, the role of health professionals in the detection, monitoring and control of the weight and health status of obese individuals is essential, as well as for the transfer of information about habits and customs capable of changing the routine and quality of life, in addition to ensure the improvement of the functionality of organic systems.

**Keywords:** Cardiovascular Diseases. Heart diseases. Health education. Obesity. Overweight.

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## Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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