

# Knowledge and attitudes of lifestyle – medicine approach among health care providers in primary care service

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## Introduction

The medical cost of lifestyle-related morbidity is too high. Lifestyle medicine may mitigate lifestyle-related chronic diseases and increase medical fitness among the population. The lifestyle medicine approach to health care has yet to be studied well in primary health care services.



NUTRITION



EXERCISE



TOBACCO & ALCOHOL



STRESS MANAGEMENT



SLEEP



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

## Discussion

To the author's knowledge, this study is among few studies that assess the knowledge and attitude of lifestyle medicine-based approach among health care providers working in primary health care. The results showed that 40% of participants lacked awareness of the field of lifestyle medicine. Respondents vary on their attitude towards the importance of the lifestyle medicine components. Level of education and duration of practice were determinants for the level of awareness about lifestyle medicine and its components.

Lifestyle modification is essential in preventing and delaying the progression of many costly metabolic diseases, such as diabetes and obesity. Many large-scale trials assess the benefit of lifestyle in improving diseases such as diabetes (Galaviz et al., 2018). However, only some studies assess the integration of lifestyle medicine in primary health care (Clarke & Hauser, 2016). Many barriers affected the implementation of lifestyle medicine in primary care, such as knowledge, attitudes, and competencies among healthcare providers (Clarke & Hauser, 2016).

## Objective

To evaluate the knowledge and attitude of and interest in lifestyle medicine-based care among health care providers in primary health care.

## Methodology

A prospective, cross-sectional survey study was conducted from 1st January 2023 to 1st February 2023 and included subjects actively working in primary health care service. The study outcome measures were:

- the overall level of awareness of lifestyle medicine
- the ranked level of importance of the six pillars of lifestyle medicine
- the level of interest in implementing lifestyle medicine-based care.

Data collected and entered into Excel spreadsheet to create data set for statistical analysis.

Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the mean composite scores of the level of importance of lifestyle components

Kruskal – Wallis analysis of variance was conducted for the categorical outcome variables. Mean composite scores were calculated for lifestyle pillar rankings.

## Results

64 respondents completed the survey with a 100% response rate. 40% of respondents need to gain knowledge of lifestyle medicine. Physical activity was ranked the highest lifestyle pillar in a health care approach among all subgroups (physicians, nurses, and other health care alliances). All subgroups ranked social connections and smoking cessation as the lowest of importance. 82% of respondents reported interest in a lifestyle medicine-based approach to health care. A direct correlation was found between the level of education, duration of practice, and interest in lifestyle medicine.

## Conclusions

Despite the overall medium level of awareness of lifestyle medicine (60%), most respondents express their interest in implementing a lifestyle medicine approach in primary health care practice, with physical activity healthy diet ranked as the most important pillars. Low level of education and duration of practice could be potential barriers to implementing this approach. Further research with a large sample more inclusive of different health care categories in primary health care is recommended.

## Limitations

The study included small size sample, all are health care providers actively in work. Future studies with large number of participants include health care providers, patients and those not in active work are recommended.

## Key message for family medicine physicians

- ✓ Structure lifestyle medicine-based approach is highly effective in primary health care.
- ✓ The approach included the 3 pillars of lifestyle medicine and the six components of the lifestyle medicine.

## References

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