

EVALUATION OF LIFESTYLE RISK FACTORS AND DIET INFLAMMATORY INDEX OF FILIPINO SEAFARERS

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I. INTRODUCTION:

The Philippines is considered to be the top supplier of seafarers worldwide. In 2014, a total of 517,972 Filipino seafarers, or 22% of all overseas Filipino workers in the world, was deployed. This helped the Philippine economy to grow and to become more stable (Gregorio, 2016). Due to their field of work, seafarers are constantly exposed to various occupational safety and health hazards. Furthermore, mortality and disease among seafarers are also largely attributed and explained by different unhealthy lifestyle factors, such as smoking, alcohol consumption, lack of physical activity, obesity, and malnutrition (Slišković, 2016). In a study conducted by Gregorio in 2012, Filipino seafarers encounter health problems such as high propensity for an unhealthy diet. Contributing factors to this particular problem were listed in the same study, which includes: vegetables and fruits are of limited supply and are usually consumed first as they are more prone to spoilage; frozen meats and fish are served for the rest of the voyage; and lack of control over food choices. Having a healthy diet is one of the major promoters of health. Healthy diet, as described in a study by Laudico in 2015, is a diet low in animal fat, rich in starchy foods, and with substantial fruits and vegetables. Unhealthy diet, on the other hand, is rich in fat, salt and free sugars, and/or in smoked, salt-pickled/preserved foods. Diet, alongside with other lifestyle factors such as smoking and alcoholic beverage use, physical inactivity, health status, and family health history are considered risk factors for the development of non-communicable diseases.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

This study evaluates the lifestyle risk factors of Filipino male seafarers based on their dietary habits and to determine whether age, job classification, body mass index (BMI), energy, physical activity, alcohol consumption, cigarette smoking, hypertension status, blood glucose and cholesterol are associated with their Dietary Inflammatory Index (DII).

III. METHODOLOGY:

The research team distributed the Adult Semi-Quantitative Food Frequency Questionnaire to 219 accredited seafarer manning agencies from POEA, DOH, and MARINA. The questionnaire consists of personal and health information, quantity and frequency of food taken during the past year. Participants are limited to new and existing seafarers working both locally and internationally. They are also those who take part in the ship's operations and maintenance, *i.e.* perform repair and maintenance works, special ship personnel, and cleaning and catering personnel. A total of 1377 valid questionnaires were encoded using Epi Info for data analysis and determination of DII. These were obtained and cross-tabulated to age, job classification, body mass index, energy, physical activity, alcohol consumption, cigarette smoking, hypertension status, blood glucose and cholesterol.

IV. RESULTS:

Almost 33% of the male respondents are 25 to 33 years old. Majority are returning, international based seafarers and are crew members. Forty-three (43%) percent of seafarers who have normal BMI have lower DII scores. Energy (kcal) ($p=0.00$), physical activity ($p=0.02$), and high blood glucose ($p=0.02$) are associated to DII ($p=0.00$). Age ($p=0.22$), job classification ($p=0.08$), BMI ($p=0.13$), alcohol consumption ($p=0.61$), cigarette smoking ($p=0.61$), hypertensive status ($p=0.39$), and high blood cholesterol ($p=0.64$) are not associated to DII. ($\alpha > 0.05$).

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

In this study, majority of our respondents are generally healthy, diet of seafarers on board may not be a contributing factor to the development of lifestyle related diseases. Interventions on board, like awareness and information dissemination on balanced and appropriate amount of food intake and strategic planning of food preparation should be implemented and during embarkation period, support advocacy and education of proper nutrition and promotion of healthy lifestyle habits are also recommended.