SUMMARY

Introduction

The review of literature had shown that there is paucity of studies on obesity among non-pregnant women of reproductive age attending general out-patient clinics in this part of the world despite the fact that they contribute a sizeable number of patients seen daily in these clinics.

Aim and Objectives

This study was done to describe the risk factors and clinical correlates of obesity among non-pregnant women of reproductive age with a view to improving self care efforts among obese women. Specifically, the objectives of this study were to determine the proportion of obese non-pregnant women of reproductive age, attending the GOPD clinics and their characteristics, factors associated with obesity and co-morbid conditions.

Methods

This study was a descriptive cross-sectional one involving two hundred and sixty two randomly selected non-pregnant women of reproductive age attending the GOP clinic that met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. A structured questionnaire containing the bio-demographic data, BMI, laboratory investigations, medical conditions and associated factors of obesity was administered by the interviewer to the selected patients. Data was entered into the computer using the SPSS software and analysed.

Results
The proportion of obese respondents in this study was 27.5%. Majority of the obese respondents (65.3%) had mild obesity. Most of the respondents (29.4%) were aged between 25 and 29 years while those aged 15-19 years formed the least (5.7%). Only a minority of the respondents (3.4%) had no formal education.

From the various associated factors of obesity, age, parity, level of education, religion, social class, income, marital status and family history of obesity were found to be risk factors associated with obesity in this class of women. However, residence, type of marriage, household size, period set aside for exercise and fast/fatty food eating were not found to be among the risk factors.

Diabetes mellitus, hypertension and weight bearing joint pains were found to have a significant association with obesity in non-pregnant women of reproductive age. There was no significant association of infertility problem with obesity in this study.

**Conclusion**

Many of the associated factors have a significant influence on obesity in non-pregnant women of reproductive age. Therefore, there is the need for family physicians to be aware of these factors in order to inform, educate and counsel this class of women on the associated risk factors of obesity and its common co-morbidities as part of the measures for reducing obesity.