SUMMARY

Background

Cardiovascular diseases (CVD) have become a leading cause of mortality and morbidity worldwide. Undergraduates are majorly adolescents and many lifelong health-related behaviors are established during this period. Also, rate of some cardiovascular risk factors (cigarette smoking, alcohol use) is particularly increasing among young people and students’ population. Identification of risk factors present in young people is important because correction of modifiable risk factors are more effective in this age group than in older patient.

Upsurge of Diabetes Mellitus and hypertension is propelled by the growing prevalence of overweight and obesity worldwide especially among children and adolescent. When these are combined with occurrence of individual family risk factors of CVD, the need for a focused investigation of CVD in young adults can be better appreciated.

Objective

(1) To determine the prevalence of some selected cardiovascular risk factors among undergraduate students presenting at the University Health Clinic.

(2) To determine the socio demographic factors associated with the risk factors of cardiovascular diseases among the undergraduate students.

(3) To determine the relationship between cardiovascular risk factors and family functioning among undergraduate students of University of Ilorin, using the family APGAR score.

Method

A cross-sectional study was conducted between February and March, 2014 in the University Health Clinic of University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. Data was collected using a semi-
structured questionnaire, laboratory tests (to determine prevalence of selected risk factors) and family APGAR score chart (to assess family functioning).

Results

The prevalence of cardiovascular risk factors assessed were: high high-sensitivity C reactive protein (hs-CRP) -43.5%, high TC -43.0%, alcohol use -38.0%, proteinuria-31.0%, obesity-7.0%, cigarette smoking -3.0% and diabetes mellitus-2.0%.

This study showed that most of the participants were from highly functional families (73.0%); while only 3.0% of the participants were from dysfunctional families. Dysfunctional families were associated with the following risk factors: overweight, hypertension, high hs-CRP, hyperuricemia and alcohol ingestion. Those from highly functional families were associated with obesity, proteinuria, leisure-time physical inactivity and smoking.

Conclusion

This study has shown that undergraduate students of University of Ilorin presenting at the University Health Clinic, have a high prevalence of cardiovascular risk factors such as dyslipidemia, alcohol intake, high hs-CRP, physical inactivity, proteinuria, hypertension and low prevalence of cigarette smoking and diabetes. Significant relationship was demonstrable between the family functioning of the participants and some of the cardiovascular risk factors assessed (alcohol intake, hyperuricemia, high TC, hypertension and overweight).

Primary care physicians should be increasingly sensitized on the burden of cardiovascular disease of the adolescents and students and the role of family functioning as regards cardiovascular risk should be further evaluated by family physicians in our setting.