

letters

Comment on: Body mass index and periodontal health status among young Saudi adults: a cross-sectional study

To the Editor: We read with interest the study by Esam Dhaifullah et al titled "Body mass index and periodontal health status among young Saudi adults: a cross-sectional study".¹ We want to commend the authors on their deep insight into the periodontal health status of dental students and its association with BMI. The study is a cross-sectional correlation study between body mass index and periodontal health status among 380 dental students recruited from the 4th and 6th academic year. The periodontal health status was assessed by plaque index, gingival index and community periodontal index scores and BMI by assessing weight and height. There are a few points that might add to the impact of the study and would guide future studies on a similar topic.

First, the periodontal health status of an individual is dependent on the number of factors such as knowledge of oral hygiene, nutritional status, health status. Therefore the amount of knowledge about oral hygiene among dental students would be higher as compared to other health professionals compromising the external validity of the study. Second, periodontal health status is reported to be positively correlated to good health, but BMI is not a good predictor of health and well being.² The better alternative would have been simple waist circumference (measures central obesity) which is a strong predictor of overall fitness of an individual. The authors did not measure waist circumference among participants, but in the discussion, they noted that the current study otherwise agrees with a study by de Castilhos

et al who reported no correlation between waist circumference and periodontitis.³

Future research is recommended to further explore the association between the variables BMI, waist circumference and periodontal health status among dental and non-dental students. The studies must also include nutritional status and night eating habits⁴ among students, which are factors that may have a profound effect on dental hygiene.

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