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## Longitudinal changes in lifestyle behaviors and health status of the health science community at Kuwait University

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**Introduction & Objectives:** Health professionals who adopt healthy lifestyles are more likely to promote healthy living practices in their community. Data are needed to inform the building of such a culture. Therefore, the aim was to benchmark HSC staff and students' health across successive years.

**Methods:** Data on health behavior profiles related to smoking, physical activity, stress, sleep, systolic and diastolic blood pressure (SBP and DBP), heart rate (HR), random blood sugar (RBS), body mass index (BMI) and waist-to-hip ratio (WHR) from the on-going longitudinal data collection was collected.

**Results:** 420 participants (130 academic or non-academic staff, 290 students, 113 males and 307 females) participated in both 2014-15 and 2015-16. From unhealthy in 2014-15 to healthy in 2015-16, comparisons using McNemar Chi-square test showed major changes in SBP (36.8%,  $p < 0.001$ ), DBP (17.5%,  $p < 0.001$ ), HR (21.1%,  $p = 0.001$ ), and moderate physical activity (20.1%,  $p = 0.002$ ). Subgroup analyses showed similar changes in status among female and student groups. Among male participants, the change was significant only in SBP and DBP and the staff subgroup in SBP, DBP and HR. A marginal change was seen in WHR from healthy to unhealthy among all participants (7.4 %,  $p = 0.040$ ) and student subgroup (6.6 %,  $p = 0.007$ ). Considerable change in the same direction was observed in BMI among female (30.7%,  $p = 0.016$ ) and student groups (30.1%,  $p = 0.032$ ). Notable proportions of all participants remained unhealthy in stress (78.8%), sleep hours (61.1%), HR (49.3%) and BMI (28.2%). Smoking status and RBS level of all participants were found to be healthy in both study years (88.8% and 98.8% respectively).

**Conclusions:** This study noted suboptimal health on several dimensions of lifestyle behaviors and objective measures. On the basis of our findings, health promotion strategies on campus can be justified.

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