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Cancer-related lifestyle risk, knowledge, risk perception, and intention to screen in a socio-economically diverse urban population in South Africa

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate adherence to the 2018 World Cancer Research Fund/American Institute for Cancer Research (WCRF/AICR) Cancer Prevention Recommendations and the association with socio-economic status (SES) and other health-related factors. A cross-sectional household survey was conducted in Soweto, Johannesburg, South Africa, using a proportionate stratified systematic random sample of men and women aged 25-55 years (*n* 407). Anthropometric measurements were conducted, and data collected on SES, dietary intake, and other lifestyle factors, using a structured questionnaire. A standard scoring algorithm was used to assess adherence to recommendations. Adherence to the 2018 WCRF/AICR Cancer Prevention Recommendations was low. Multivariate linear regression showed that lower adherence was associated with the 20-29 year age-group versus the 30-39 (β = 0.27, 95% CI = 0.00, 0.54) and 50-55 (β = 0.44, 95% CI = 0.13, 0.76) year age groups, high school education (β = -0.29, 95% CI = -0.53, -0.05), current employment (β = -0.36, 95% CI = -0.66, -0.06), living in moderate-SES area versus low-SES area (β = 0.42, 95% CI = 0.08, 0.76), and, for males only, high food security versus moderate food security (β = 0.52, 95% CI = 0.08, 0.95). Higher adherence was associated with having been screened for cancer for both males (β = 0.56, 95% CI = 0.08, 1.04) and females (β = 0.24, 95% CI = 0.00, 0.48). Low adherence to the 2018 WCRF/AICR Cancer Prevention Recommendations was associated with younger age, higher SES, low risk perception, and poor cancer screening behaviour.