

## ABSTRACT

Chronic diseases of lifestyle like diabetes mellitus and hypertension appear at greater rates in populations which consumed high fat, high calorie diets and engaged in low or no physical activity. Physical inactivity and unhealthy diets are major contributors of overweight and obesity which are risk factors for lifestyle diseases. This study aimed at determining the relationship between dietary practices, habits, physical activity and the prevalence of obesity, diagnosed diabetes and hypertension in the Swahili community of Old Town and Kisauni districts in Mombasa County, Kenya. A crosssectional study design was used. Cluster random sampling was done to pick 207 households. Data was collected on food consumption, dietary habits and physical activity. Focus Group Discussions and Key Informants Interviews were used to collect qualitative data. Results indicate that dietary habits of the Swahili community involved preparation and consumption of high fat, sugar and coconut milk-based foods. Most (75.8%) of the interviewed members of this community had low physical activity. Their dietary habits and low physical activity levels were associated with obesity, diabetes and hypertension.

**Key words:** Dietary practices, dietary habits, physical inactivity, obesity, hypertension, diabetes, Swahili, Kenya.