



Impact of Lifestyle on Health

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Introduction

Lifestyle is a way used by people, groups and nations and is formed in specific geographical, economic, political, cultural and religious text. Lifestyle is referred to the characteristics of inhabitants of a region in special time and place. It includes day to day behaviors and functions of individuals in job, activities, fun and diet.

In recent decades, life style as an important factor of health is more interested by researchers. According to WHO, 60% of related factors to individual health and quality of life are correlated to lifestyle (1). Millions of people follow an unhealthy lifestyle. Hence, they encounter illness, disability and even death. Problems like metabolic diseases, joint and skeletal problems, cardio-vascular diseases, hypertension, overweight, violence and so on, can be caused by an unhealthy lifestyle. The relationship of lifestyle and health should be highly considered.

Today, wide changes have occurred in life of all people. Malnutrition, unhealthy diet, smoking, alcohol consuming, drug abuse, stress and so on, are the presentations of unhealthy life style that they are used as dominant form of lifestyle. Besides, the lives of citizens face with new challenges. For instance, emerging new technologies within IT such as the internet and virtual communication networks, lead our world to a major challenge that threatens the physical and mental health of indi-

viduals. The challenge is the overuse and misuse of the technology.

Therefore, according to the existing studies, it can be said that: lifestyle has a significant influence on physical and mental health of human being. There are different forms of such influences. Consanguinity in some ethnicity is a dominant form of life style that it leads to the genetic disorders. Reformation of this unhealthy life style is a preventing factor for decreasing the rate of genetic diseases (2). In some countries, the overuse of drugs is a major unhealthy life style. Iran is one of the 20 countries using the most medications. They prefer medication to other intervention. Furthermore, in 15-40% of cases they use medications about without prescription (3). Pain relievers, eye drops and antibiotics have the most usage in Iran. While self-medications such as antibiotics have a negative effect on the immune system, if the individual would be affected by infection, antibiotics will not be effective in treatment. Overall, 10 percent of those who are self-medicated will experience severe complications such as drug resistance. Sometimes drug allergy is so severe that it can cause death (4).

Finally, variables of lifestyle that influence on health can be categorized in some items:

- 1- **Diet and Body Mass Index (BMI):** Diet is the greatest factor in lifestyle and has a direct and positive relation with health.

Poor diet and its consequences like obesity is the common healthy problem in urban societies. Unhealthy lifestyle can be measured by BMI. Urban lifestyle leads to the nutrition problems like using fast foods and poor foods, increasing problems like cardiovascular (5).

- 2- **Exercise:** For treating general health problems, the exercise is included in life style (6). The continuous exercise along with a healthy diet increases the health. Some studies stress on the relation of active life style with happiness (7, 8).
- 3- **Sleep:** One of the bases of healthy life is the sleep. Sleep cannot be apart from life. Sleep disorders have several social, psychological, economical and healthy consequences. Lifestyle may effect on sleep and sleep has a clear influence on mental and physical health (9).
- 4- **Sexual behavior:** Normal sex relation is necessary in healthy life. Dysfunction of sex relation is the problem of most of societies and it has a significant effect on mental and physical health. It can be said that dysfunctional sex relation may result in various family problems or sex related illnesses like; AIDS
- 5- **Substance abuse:** Addiction is considered as an unhealthy life style. Smoking and using other substance may result in various problems; cardiovascular disease, asthma, cancer, brain injury. According to the resent studies in Iran, 43% of females and 64% of males experience the use of hubble-bubble (10). A longitudinal study shows that 30% of people between 18-65 years old smoke cigarette permanently (11).
- 6- **Medication abuse:** It is a common form of using medication in Iran and it is considered as an unhealthy life style. Unhealthy behaviors in using medication are as followed: self-treatment, sharing medi-

cation, using medications without prescription, prescribing too many drugs, prescribing the large number of each drug, unnecessary drugs, bad handwriting in prescription, disregard to the contradictory drugs, disregard to harmful effects of drugs, not explaining the effects of drugs.

- 7- **Application of modern technologies:** Advanced technology facilitates the life of human beings. Misuse of technology may result in unpleasant consequences. For example, using of computer and other devices up to midnight, may effect on the pattern of sleep and it may disturb sleep. Addiction to use mobile phone is related to depression symptoms (12).
- 8- **Recreation:** Leisure pass time is a sub factor of life style. Neglecting leisure can bring negative consequences. With disorganized planning and unhealthy leisure, people endanger their health.
- 9- **Study:** Study is the exercise of soul. Placing study as a factor in lifestyle may lead to more physical and mental health. For example, prevalence of dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease is lower in educated people. Study could slow process of dementia.

Conclusion

With a look at existing studies in health domain, 9 key factors can be suggested for healthy life style (Fig. 1). In regard to each factor, the systematic planning in micro and macro level can be established. It can provide a social and individual healthy lifestyle.

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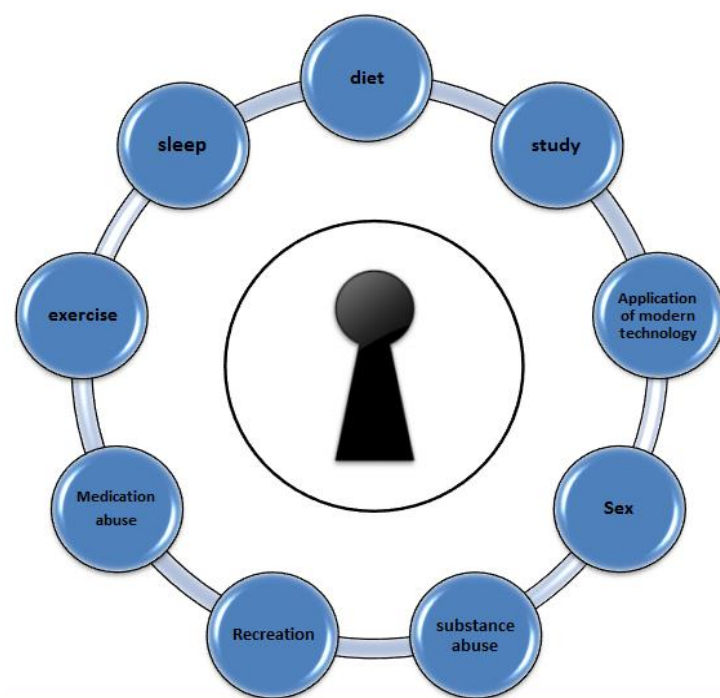


Fig. 1: Nine key factors that forming healthy life style

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