Abstract

Background: Overweight and obesity are considered precipitating factors in the apparition of symptoms of gastroesophageal reflux disease. Besides antacids and acid-suppressors are highly effective in the palliation of such symptoms. Aim: to assess the prevalence of heartburn and epigastric burning pain, triggering factors, consumption of antacids or acid-suppressors, self-medication and Body Mass Index (BMI) in adult population. Patients and Method: using a personal interview and physical examination, 433 adult subjects were assessed, excluding those with previously diagnosed gastro-esophageal reflux disease, history of upper gastro-intestinal surgery, and use of these medications due to other conditions. Results: symptoms in study were present in 60.1% (62.9% in women and 57.3% in men) being epigastric burning pain more frequent (35.6%) than heartburn (24.5%). Among symptomatic subjects 95% used medication on regular basis. Daily symptoms were referred by 23.5% of subjects and among them 64% use acid-suppressors. On the contrary subjects with sporadic symptoms recur mainly to antacids (65%-83%). Auto-medication was recognized by 78%-92% of people with sporadic symptoms and significantly less (48%) by people with daily symptoms. Emotional stress (35.1%-58.6%), alcohol intake (9%) and spicy food (5%) were mentioned as important triggering factors. Less than 4% of subjects considered increase in body weight as an important precipitating factor. BMI in asymptomatic group was: women 23.2 ± 3.4 kg/m²; men 24.3 ± 3.3 kg/m². Figures in symptomatic group were 22.5 ± 3.1 kg/m² and 25 ± 3.5 kg/m² respectively. In the former, overweight was 25.4% and obesity 5.7% not significantly different than 28.5% y 10.4% respectively in symptomatic group. Conclusions: The vast majority of symptomatic subjects successfully use medication for palliation. Subjects with sporadic symptoms use mainly antacids while subjects with daily symptoms use mainly acid-suppressors. There is no association between frequency of peptic gastro-esophageal symptoms and BMI.

Keywords

Peptic symptoms, antacids and acid-suppressors, body mass index.