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Assessment of Portuguese firefighters' lifestyle: results from an online survey

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Abstract

Firefighters are an occupational group exposed to multiple agents, such as heat, fatigue, noise and chemical substances. Exposure to these agents can have a severe impact on their health. In addition, lifestyle behaviors may also affect their health and well-being. As such, the aim of this study was to assess health-related lifestyle behaviors in Portuguese firefighters. Data was obtained via an online survey using an adapted version of the FANTASTIC Lifestyle Assessment Inventory that included questions on relationships with family and friends, physical activity, nutrition, tobacco and alcohol consumption, sleep and stress, career and shifts. The access link to the survey was disseminated through collaboration with the National School of Firefighters. Data was collected between April 24th and May 27th 2021. From the 861 participating firefighters, the majority were men and had less than 40 years old. Around half were married and were firefighters for more than ten years. The majority referred to have people to talk about important things and to give and receive affection. Regarding physical activity the majority did not practice physical activity in the professional context. Only a quarter reported to have healthy eating habits and the majority reported the consumption of high-calorie foods and to be exceeding their ideal weight. More than a third reported smoking and around 16% reported driving motor vehicles after consuming alcohol. Around 40% reported to consume more than 3 caffeine drinks per day. Around a tenth reported to almost never have good quality sleep and only around 78% reported to have difficulties sleeping. About 43% didn't have capacity to manage stress in their day to day life and about 57% were not able to relax in their free time. Around 40% reported not being happy with their work and a third reported to do periodic medical exams.

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