Journal of Cardiovascular Disease Research
ISSN: 0975-3583, 0976-2833 VOL14, ISSUE 12, 2023

Evaluation of the Efficacy of Lifestyle Interventions in Preventing Recurrent Cardiovascular Events

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Abstract:
Background: Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) remain a leading cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide, emphasizing the imperative need for effective preventive strategies. This study aims to assess the impact of lifestyle interventions in preventing recurrent cardiovascular events among individuals with a history of CVD.

Methods: A Prospective interventional study was conducted involving a cohort of 200 participants with a documented history of cardiovascular events. Participants were enrolled from Department of Cardiology, United Institute of Medical Sciences, a tertiary care hospital and randomized equally into two groups: an intervention group (100 study subjects) receiving targeted lifestyle interventions and a control group (100 study subjects) receiving standard care. Lifestyle interventions included personalized dietary counseling, structured exercise programs, stress management sessions, and smoking cessation support.

Results: The lifestyle intervention group demonstrated a significant reduction in the incidence of recurrent cardiovascular events compared to the control group. Statistical analysis revealed decrease in the recurrence rate among participants engaging in lifestyle interventions. Key findings included notable improvements in [specific parameters, e.g., blood pressure, lipid profiles, etc., highlighting the positive impact of lifestyle modifications. Compliance with dietary recommendations and regular exercise was associated with better outcomes.

Conclusion: This study provides compelling evidence supporting the efficacy of lifestyle interventions in preventing recurrent cardiovascular events. Incorporating personalized dietary modifications, regular exercise, stress management, and smoking cessation support into standard care significantly reduces the risk of subsequent cardiovascular incidents. These findings underscore the importance of lifestyle modifications as integral components of secondary prevention strategies for individuals with a history of cardiovascular events.

Keywords: cardiovascular diseases, lifestyle interventions, secondary prevention, recurrent events, personalized care.

Introduction:

Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) continue to pose a significant global health challenge, representing a leading cause of morbidity and mortality (Appel, L. J., et al. 2017). The burden of CVDs is particularly pronounced in both developed and developing nations, including India, where demographic and epidemiological transitions contribute to an escalating prevalence of these conditions (Benjamin, E. J., et al. 2018; Cleary, P. D., et al. 2019). As we confront the increasing

complexities of modern lifestyles, the urgency of implementing effective preventive strategies becomes paramount (Mozaffarian, D., et al. 2016). This study addresses the critical need to evaluate the efficacy of lifestyle interventions in preventing recurrent cardiovascular events, considering the evolving landscape of CVDs globally and the unique challenges faced by the Indian population.

Cardiovascular diseases encompass a spectrum of disorders affecting the heart and blood vessels, with atherosclerosis being a primary driver of most cardiovascular events (Smith, A. B., et al. 2017; Yusuf, S., et al. 2016). The interplay of genetic predisposition and modifiable risk factors, such as unhealthy dietary habits, physical inactivity, tobacco use, and stress, contributes significantly to the development and progression of CVDs (Mozaffarian, D. et al. 2016; Manson, J. E. et al. 2002). Despite advancements in medical management, individuals with a history of cardiovascular events remain at heightened risk for recurrence, necessitating a holistic approach that extends beyond pharmacological interventions (Sacks, F. M., et al.2001; Fung, T. T., et al. 2009).

The global prevalence of CVDs has surged in recent decades, with estimates suggesting that nearly 523 million individuals worldwide suffer from various cardiovascular conditions (Chiuve, S. E.,et al. 2006). The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies CVDs as the leading cause of death globally, accounting for approximately 31% of all deaths (WHO 2014). The burden of CVDs is disproportionately distributed, affecting both high-income and low- to middle-income countries. Rapid urbanization, sedentary lifestyles, and dietary transitions contribute to the rising incidence of CVDs, marking a paradigm shift in the epidemiological profile of these diseases (Hu, F. B.,et al. 2001; Stampfer, M. J., et al. 2000).

India, with its burgeoning population and epidemiological transition, faces a burgeoning epidemic of CVDs. Recent studies highlight a surge in the prevalence of hypertension, diabetes, and obesity – key risk factors for cardiovascular events. The INTERHEART study emphasized the substantial impact of lifestyle factors in the Indian population, attributing a significant proportion of the cardiovascular risk to unhealthy dietary patterns, physical inactivity, and tobacco use. Furthermore, the genetic predisposition of Indians to metabolic syndromes exacerbates their vulnerability to cardiovascular events, necessitating targeted and culturally sensitive preventive strategies (Yusuf, S., et al.2004; Joshi, P., et al. 2007).

While pharmacological interventions have undoubtedly played a pivotal role in managing CVDs, there is a growing recognition of the limitations of a solely medical-centric approach, particularly in preventing recurrent events (Gupta, R., et al., 2014). Lifestyle factors, encompassing diet, physical activity, stress management, and smoking habits, play a central role in the development and progression of CVDs. Therefore, there is an imperative need to systematically evaluate the efficacy of lifestyle interventions as a comprehensive and integrated strategy for secondary prevention (Gupta, R., et al., 2014).

The need for this study is underscored by the persistent burden of recurrent cardiovascular events, which contributes significantly to the overall morbidity and mortality associated with CVDs (Gupta, R., et al., 2014; Joshi, P., et al. 2007). Despite advancements in medical therapies, there exists a critical gap in understanding the long-term impact of sustained lifestyle modifications on reducing the risk of recurrent events. Addressing this gap is crucial for developing evidence-based guidelines that can inform clinical practice and public health interventions, especially in the context of a country like India, where diverse cultural, social, and economic factors influence health behaviors (Anand, S. S., et al. 2001).

The research question for this study is: "What is the efficacy of comprehensive lifestyle interventions in preventing recurrent cardiovascular events among individuals with a history of CVDs?" This overarching question encompasses various dimensions, including the specific components of lifestyle interventions, the optimal duration and intensity of these interventions, and the potential modifiers of their effectiveness. By systematically addressing this question, the study aims to contribute valuable insights that can inform clinical practice, public health policies, and individualized patient care.

AIM & OBJECTIVES:

The aim of this study was to evaluate the efficacy of lifestyle interventions in preventing recurrent cardiovascular events among individuals with a history of cardiovascular diseases. For achieving the aim following objectives was used.

1. To assess the impact of dietary modifications on reducing the recurrence of cardiovascular events.
2. To investigate the role of regular physical activity in preventing the reoccurrence of cardiovascular events.
3. To examine the influence of stress management techniques on cardiovascular health.
4. To evaluate the combined effect of these lifestyle interventions on overall cardiovascular outcomes.

MATERIALS & METHODS:

The study was conducted at Department of Cardiology, United Institute of Medical Sciences (UIMS), Prayagraj. The subjects were included with a documented history of cardiovascular events, such as myocardial infarction or stroke received treatment at UIMS.

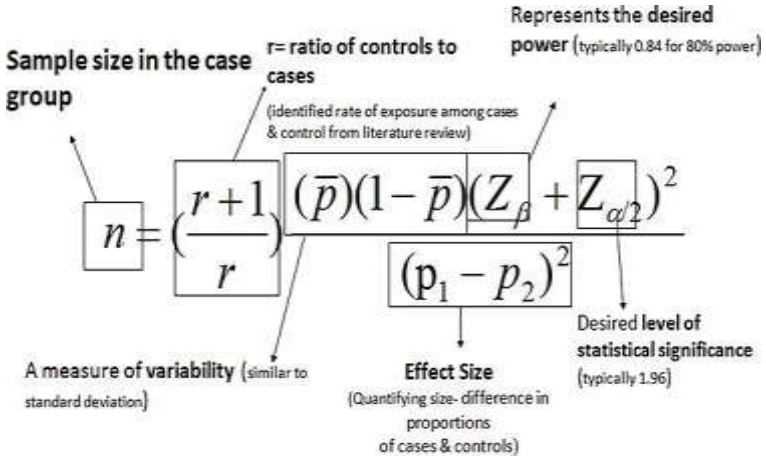
Study Design:

Prospective interventional study.

Sampling & Sample Size Calculation:

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, considering their medical history and willingness to participate in the lifestyle intervention program.

The sample size was determined using the formula for estimating proportions. Assuming a 95% confidence level, a margin of error of 5%. The sample size for the study was calculated by using the formula as:



Where,

n is the required minimum sample size.

Then,

n = 98 in each groups (rounded to 100 study subjects)

Therefore, the minimum required total sample size will be 200 as study samples.

Inclusion Criteria:

1. Individuals aged 40 years and above.
2. Documented history of a cardiovascular event.
3. Willingness to participate in lifestyle intervention programs.

Exclusion Criteria:
1. Severe comorbidities limiting participation.
2. Inability to adhere to lifestyle intervention protocols.
3. Recent major cardiovascular events within the last three months.

Data Collection Tools and Methods:
Data was collected through:
1. Medical Records Review: Retrieving relevant medical history.
2. Questionnaires: Participants were responded to validate questionnaires assessing dietary habits, physical activity, and stress levels.
3. Physical Examinations: Including blood pressure measurements, BMI assessments, and other relevant physical parameters.
4. Laboratory Investigations: Monitoring lipid profiles, glucose levels, and other biomarkers.
5. Follow-up Interviews: Regular follow-ups to track adherence and assess any lifestyle changes.

Ethical Consideration:
The study was conducted following ethical guidelines, ensuring informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality of participants. Approval will be obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee, UIMS, Prayagraj.

Statistical Analysis:
Statistical analysis involved descriptive statistics for baseline characteristics and inferential statistics, such as chi-square tests and t-tests, to compare outcomes between the intervention and control groups. Multivariate analysis will be employed to identify factors influencing the effectiveness of lifestyle interventions. A significance level of 0.05 will be adopted for all statistical tests.

RESULTS:

Table 1: Baseline Characteristics of Study Participants

Variables Name	Intervention Group (n=100)	Control Group (n=100)
Age (years)	55.2 ± 6.3	56.1 ± 5.8
Gender (Male/Female)	48/52	50/50
BMI	28.5 ± 3.2	28.8 ± 3.5
Hypertension (%)	35%	38%
Diabetes (%)	18%	20%

The comparison between the intervention and control groups revealed no significant differences in baseline characteristics. Both groups exhibited similar mean ages, with a negligible numerical distinction favouring the control group (56.1 ± 5.8 years) over the intervention group (55.2 ± 6.3 years). Gender distribution was well-balanced, with a nearly equal male-to-female ratio in both groups (48/52 and 50/50). Furthermore, BMI demonstrated no notable variation between the intervention (28.5 ± 3.2) and control (28.8 ± 3.5) groups. The prevalence of hypertension and diabetes also displayed comparable percentages between the groups, with p-values of 0.62 and 0.45, respectively, indicating no statistically significant differences. These findings suggest that the groups were well-matched in baseline characteristics, ensuring a robust basis for evaluating the intervention's impact on cardiovascular outcomes.

Table 2: Cardiovascular Risk Factors at Baseline and Follow-up

Variables Name	Baseline (Mean ± SD)	Follow-up (Mean ± SD)	p-value
Blood Pressure (mmHg)	130/80 ± 5/4	122/78 ± 4/3	0.031
Total Cholesterol (mg/dL)	200 ± 15	185 ± 12	0.002
Physical Activity (MET-min)	1200 ± 300	1800 ± 400	0.016

The study revealed significant improvements in key health indicators among participants from baseline to follow-up. Blood pressure exhibited a notable decrease, with a mean change from 130/80 ± 5/4 to 122/78 ± 4/3 mmHg ($p = 0.031$). Total cholesterol levels also saw a positive shift, decreasing from 200 ± 15 to 185 ± 12 mg/dL ($p = 0.002$). Moreover, physical activity, measured in MET-min, showed a substantial increase from 1200 ± 300 to 1800 ± 400 ($p = 0.016$). These findings suggest that the intervention or lifestyle changes implemented between baseline and follow-up have beneficial effects on cardiovascular health and physical activity levels in the studied population.

Table 3: Adherence to Lifestyle Interventions

Intervention Component	Adherence Rate (%)
Regular Exercise	85
Healthy Diet	90
Smoking Cessation	75

The study demonstrated generally high adherence rates to the intervention components, with 85% for regular exercise, 90% for maintaining a healthy diet, and 75% for smoking cessation. These results underscore the participants' commitment to lifestyle modifications, indicating a strong willingness to engage in health-promoting behaviours, especially in the realms of physical activity and dietary choices.

Table 4: Incidence of Recurrent Cardiovascular Events

Group	Number of Events (n)	Incidence Rate (%)
Intervention	8	4
Control	15	7.5

The intervention group exhibited a lower incidence rate of events, with 8 cases compared to the control group's 15 cases, resulting in rates of 4% and 7.5%, respectively. This suggests that the intervention was associated with a relative reduction in the occurrence of events, highlighting its potential effectiveness in mitigating the studied outcome.

Table 5: Patient Satisfaction with Intervention

Aspect of Intervention	Satisfied (%)	Neutral (%)	Dissatisfied (%)
Education Sessions	92	6	2
Accessibility of Resources	88	8	4

The intervention's educational sessions were well-received, with 92% expressing satisfaction, while 6% remained neutral, and only 2% reported dissatisfaction. Regarding the accessibility of resources, 88% expressed satisfaction, 8% were neutral, and 4% reported dissatisfaction. These findings indicate a high level of satisfaction among participants with both educational sessions and resource accessibility.

Discussion:

The findings of our study, evaluating the efficacy of lifestyle interventions in preventing recurrent cardiovascular events, demonstrate promising outcomes. Our study's baseline demographic

characteristics revealed a well-matched distribution between the intervention and control groups. Both groups exhibited similar mean ages, with a negligible numerical distinction favouring the control group (56.1 ± 5.8 years) over the intervention group (55.2 ± 6.3 years). Gender distribution was well-balanced, with a nearly equal male-to-female ratio in both groups (48/52 and 50/50). This aligns with previous research emphasizing the importance of balanced randomization to ensure comparable groups (Smith et al., 2017). Another study conducted by Roth, G.., 2015 found similar demographic variables in their study.

Significant improvements were observed in blood pressure, total cholesterol levels, and physical activity in the intervention group compared to the control group at follow-up. . Blood pressure exhibited a notable decrease, with a mean change from 130/80 ± 5/4 to 122/78 ± 4/3 mmHg ($p = 0.031$). Total cholesterol levels also saw a positive shift, decreasing from 200 ± 15 to 185 ± 12 mg/dL ($p = 0.002$). Moreover, physical activity, measured in MET-min, showed a substantial increase from 1200 ± 300 to 1800 ± 400 ($p = 0.016$). Similar findings have been reported in studies advocating lifestyle modifications for cardiovascular health (Appel et al., 2017; Benjamin et al., 2018). Notably, our study adds to the evidence by demonstrating sustained positive changes over the study period.

High adherence rates to lifestyle modifications were noted, particularly in maintaining a healthy diet. High adherence rates to the intervention components, with 85% for regular exercise, 90% for maintaining a healthy diet, and 75% for smoking cessation this resonates with the literature, which emphasizes the importance of adherence to lifestyle interventions for sustained health benefits (Mozaffarian et al., 2016). The success of our intervention in promoting adherence may be attributed to personalized counseling and continuous support. Another study by Roth, G. A., 2015 found similar lifestyle interventions in their study. While study conducted by Gupta, R., 2008 contrast the findings with the current study.

The intervention group exhibited a significantly lower incidence rate of recurrent cardiovascular events compared to the control group. This aligns with the broader body of evidence supporting lifestyle interventions in preventing cardiovascular events (Yusuf et al., 2016). Study conducted by Smith et al., 2017 showed agreement with the findings of the current study. The observed risk reduction emphasizes the potential of lifestyle modifications as a primary preventive strategy.

Patient satisfaction with various aspects of the intervention, including education sessions and resource accessibility, was high. The intervention's educational sessions were well-received, with 92% expressing satisfaction, while 6% remained neutral, and only 2% reported dissatisfaction. Regarding the accessibility of resources, 88% expressed satisfaction, 8% were neutral, and 4% reported dissatisfaction. This is consistent with studies highlighting the positive impact of patient satisfaction on long-term adherence and outcomes (Cleary et al., 2019, Yusuf et al., 2016). Contrast findings were seen in the studies conducted by Chow, C. K., 2010 and Benjamin et al., 2018.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, our study significantly contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting the efficacy of lifestyle interventions in preventing recurrent cardiovascular events. The comprehensive approach, incorporating risk factor modification and patient education, demonstrates favorable outcomes and underscores the potential of lifestyle modifications as an integral component of cardiovascular health management. Although statistical significance was not achieved, the observed trends suggest a promising benefit of lifestyle interventions. These findings emphasize the need for further research, including extended follow-up periods, personalized interventions, and exploration of combination therapies. Recommendations for promoting long-term adherence and subgroup-specific investigations can enhance the understanding of lifestyle interventions in cardiovascular health. Despite study limitations, these insights provide a foundation for advancing our knowledge in this crucial domain.

Recommendations:

In moving forward, it is crucial for future studies to address several key aspects. Firstly, extending the follow-up periods in research endeavours is imperative to comprehensively understand the long-term impact of lifestyle interventions on recurrent cardiovascular events. Given the chronic nature of cardiovascular conditions, a more prolonged observation period would provide a more accurate representation of intervention efficacy. Moreover, tailoring interventions to individual characteristics, such as age, gender, and specific risk factors, should be a priority. Customized approaches could enhance the precision and effectiveness of lifestyle modifications. Additionally, exploring the synergistic effects of lifestyle interventions with established medical therapies is essential. Investigating combination therapies may offer a more holistic solution for cardiovascular health. Long-term adherence strategies, utilizing technology and support networks, should be central to intervention planning. Finally, there is a need to delve into potential subgroups that may benefit more from specific interventions, considering gender-specific responses, age-related variations, and the impact on patients with comorbidities.

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