

PhD Thesis Proposal¹

General Information		
PhD Thesis Title	Evaluation of changes in lifestyle and interpretation of their impact on non-communicable diseases, and implementation of an obesity control program among University students in Lebanon	
USEK Doctoral Program	PhD in Life and Earth Sciences	
Research Center	NA	
Research Group	NA	
Research Axis		
PhD Supervisor	Name & Title : Julien Sophie , Associate Professor Email : sophiejulien@usek.edu.lb	University Address : Holy Spirit University of Kaslik-USEK , Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Co-supervisor (if applicable)	Name & Title : Email :	University Address :
Location (s)	Location 1: USEK- Kaslik Campus	Work shift calendar /per year (%): 70
	Location 2: (if applicable) Universities among Lebanon	Work shift calendar /per year (%) 30
Potential funding and scholarship	AUF, Erasmus, Prima	

Applicant Profile and/or Special Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Master in Clinical Nutrition - Must hold the Lebanese Dietetic Licensure - Strong experience with the Nutritional Care Process in hospital care. - Possess advanced statistical analysis and Excel skills - Dynamic and proactive approach in carrying clinical settings responsibilities - Autonomy in carrying collection and analysis of the data. - Previous peer-reviewed publication will be considered as an advantage - Strong English language skills 	
Comps Exam Language (to be check-marked by the PhD Supervisor)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oral Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Written Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Arabic <input type="checkbox"/> French <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> English	

Subject's national or worldwide Context, Objectives & Research lines
Lifestyle including food choices, physical activity, social-environment and stress management, is currently recognized as the main contributor to global pandemic of non-communicable chronic diseases (NCD). Worldwide, more than 90% of all deaths are attributed to NCD, which refer to a group of conditions such as cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, cancer and chronic pulmonary illnesses, not caused by an acute infection.

¹ The PhD Thesis Proposal should not exceed three pages.

The young adults are particularly at risk in developing NCD due to the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic that has dramatically impaired socializing, promoted sedentary habits, developed poor eating habits, raised anxiety, stress and depression. All of these factors have contributed to high incidence of overweight and obesity, which are the major risk factors for NCD, regardless of gender, socioeconomic status and ethnicity. Currently, the estimation of the prevalence of excess body weight in University students of Lebanon is missing and the associated risks are neglected highlighting an important socioeconomic and healthcare burden to arise within the next decades.

The **main goal** of this research project is to manage overweight and obesity through the development and implementation of a multidisciplinary behavioral program to prevent NCD in the university community of Lebanon. To reach this goal, this research project will focus on **3 main objectives**:

- 1- To identify and categorize lifestyle factors attributable to excess body weight and to correlate each of them with risk of NCD through experimental and observational methods.
- 2- To implement and develop an affordable and comprehensive behavioral change intervention for obesity control as a preventive measure to NCD occurrence.
- 3- To assess effectiveness of behavioral change strategies through measurements of lifestyle changes and NCD risk factors.

The most important outcome of this research project through a multicomponent program designed to initiate and maintain healthy behavior changes would be the rating of a higher adherence to healthy lifestyle evidenced by a control or decrease of body weight in overweight and obese young adult population, and decline of NCD.

Outcomes (OCs) : What do we wish to achieve?	
OC1:	Qualitative and quantitative measurements of anthropometrics, adherence to healthy diet, physical activity, mental health correlated with NCD biochemical and clinical-related markers.
O23 :	Measure effectiveness of behavioral change intervention evidenced by a maintenance or decrease body mass index along with a higher adherence of Mediterranean diet or plant-based diet, decrease in anxiety and sedentarity, and recovery of biochemical and clinical markers levels toward normal ranges.
OC3:	Publish a validated cost-effective behavioral change program to be spread and used among healthcare institutions in Lebanon and/or globally.

References (R) (5 most recent peer-reviewed publications in the field)	
R1:	Boutari, C., & Mantzoros, C. S. (2022). A 2022 update on the epidemiology of obesity and a call to action: As its twin COVID-19 pandemic appears to be receding, the obesity and dysmetabolism pandemic continues to rage on. <i>Metabolism</i> , <i>133</i> , 155217. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.metabol.2022.155217
R2:	Baroud, T., El Masri, J., Shammaa, H., Saleh, M., Chanbour, H., & Salemech, P. (2022). The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic, Financial Wellness, and Online Teaching on Schoolteachers' Mental Health: A Cross-Sectional Study in Lebanon. <i>International Journal of Clinical Research</i> , <i>3</i> (1), 150–161. https://doi.org/10.38179/ijcr.v3i1.169
R3 :	Mizia, S., Felińczak, A., Włodarek, D., & Syrkiewicz-Świtła, M. (2021). Evaluation of Eating Habits and Their Impact on Health among Adolescents and Young Adults: A Cross-Sectional Study. <i>International</i>

	<p><i>Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health</i>, 18(8), 3996. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18083996</p>
R4:	<p>Olateju, I. V., Ogwu, D., Owolabi, M. O., Azode, U., Osula, F., Okeke, R., & Akabalu, I. (2021). Role of Behavioral Interventions in the Management of Obesity. <i>Cureus</i>. https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.18080</p>
R5:	<p>Suojanen, L.-U., Ahola, A. J., Kupila, S., Korpela, R., & Pietiläinen, K. H. (2020). Effectiveness of a web-based real-life weight management program: Study design, methods, and participants' baseline characteristics. <i>Contemporary Clinical Trials Communications</i>, 19, 100638. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.conctc.2020.100638</p>